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Old Kensington.

CHAPTER I.

BRICKS AND IVY.



QUARTER of a century ago the shabby tide of progress had not spread to the quiet old suburb where Lady Sarah Francis's brown house was standing, with its many windows dazzling as the sun travelled across the old-fashioned housetops to set into a distant sea of tenements and echoing life. The roar did not reach the old house. The children could listen to the cawing of the rooks, to the echo of the hours, as they struck on from one day to another, vibrating from the old brown tower of the church. At night the strokes seemed to ring more slowly than in the day. Little Dolly Vanborough, Lady Sarah's niece, thought each special hour had its voice. The church clock is silent now, but the rooks caw on undisturbed from one spring to another in the old Kensington suburb. There are tranquil corners still, and sunny silent nooks, and ivy wreaths growing in the western sun; and jessamines and vine-trees, planted by a former generation, spreading along the old garden-walls. But

every year the shabby stream of progress rises and engulfs one relic or another, carrying off many and many a landmark and memory. Last year only, the old church was standing, in its iron cage, at the junction of the thoroughfares. It was the Church of England itself to Dolly and George Vanborough in those early church-going days of theirs. There was the old painting of the lion and the unicorn hanging from the gallery ; the light streaming through the brown saints over the communion-table. In after-life the children may have seen other saints more glorious in crimson and in purple, nobler piles and arches, but none of them have ever seemed so near to heaven as the old Queen Anne building ; and the wooden pew with its high stools, through which elbows of straw were protruding, where they used to kneel on either side of their aunt, watching with awe-stricken faces the tears as they came falling from the widow's sad eyes.

Lady Sarah could scarcely have told you the meaning of those tears as they fell—old love and life partings, sorrows and past mercies, all came returning to her with the familiar words of the prayers. The tears fell bright and awe-stricken as she thought of the present—of distances immeasurable—of life and its inconceivable mystery ; and then her heart would warm with hope perhaps of what might be to come, of the overwhelming possibilities—how many of them to her lay in the warm clasp of the child's hand that came pushing into hers !—For her, as for the children, heaven's state was in the old wooden pew. Then the sing-song of the hymn would flood the old church with its homely cadence.

Prepare your glad voices ;
Let Hisreal rejoice,

sang the little charity children ; poor little Israelites, with blue stockings, and funny woollen knobs to their fustian caps, rejoicing, though their pastures were not green as yet, nor was their land overflowing with milk and honey. However, they sang praises for others, as all people do at times, thanks be to the merciful dispensation that allows us to weep, to work, to be comforted, and to rejoice with one another's hearts, consciously or unconsciously, as long as life exists.

Every lane, and corner, and archway had a childish story for Dolly and her brother—for Dolly most especially, because girls cling more to the inanimate aspects of life than boys do. For Dolly the hawthorn bleeds as it is laid low and is transformed year after year into iron railings and areas, for particulars of which you are requested to apply to the railway company, and to Mr. Taylor, the house-agent. In those days the lanes spread to Fulham, white with blossom in spring, or golden with the yellow London sunsets that blazed beyond the cabbage-fields. In those days there were gardens, and trees, and great walls along the high-road that came from London, passing through the old white turnpike. There were high brown walls along Kensington Gardens, reaching to the Palace Gate ; elms spread their shade, and birds chirruped, and children played behind them.

Dolly Vanborough and her brother had had many a game there, and knew every corner and haunt of this sylvan world of children and ducks and nursemaids. They had knocked their noses against the old sun-dial many and many a time. Sometimes now, as she comes walking along the straight avenues, Dolly thinks she can hear the echo of their own childish voices whooping and calling to one another as they used to do. How often they had played with their big cousin, Robert Henley, and the little Morgans, round about the stately orange-house, and made believe to be statues in the niches!

"I am Apollo," cries George Vanborough, throwing himself into an attitude.

"Apollo!" cries Robert, exploding with schoolboy wit: "an Apollo-guy, you mean."

Dolly does not understand why the Morgan boys laugh and George blushes up furiously. When they are tired of jumping about in the sun, the statues straggle homewards, accompanied by Dolly's French governess, who has been reading a novel on a bench close by. They pass along the front of the old palace that stands blinking its sleepy windows across elmy vistas, or into tranquil courts where sentries go pacing. Robert has his grandmother living in the Palace, and he strides off across the court to her apartments. The children think she is a witch, and always on the watch for them, though they do not tell Robert so. The Morgans turn up Old Street, and George and Dolly escort them so far on their way home. It is a shabby brown street, with shops at one end and old-fashioned houses, stone-stepped, bow-windowed at the other. Dear Old Street! where an echo still lingers of the quaint and stately music of the past, of which the voice comes to us like a song of Mozart sounding above the dreamy flutterings of a Wagner of the present! Little Zoe Morgan would linger to peep at the parrot that lived next door in the area, with the little page-boy, who always winked at them as they went by; little Cassie would glance wistfully at a certain shop-front where various medals and crosses were exposed for sale. There were even in those days convents and Catholics established at Kensington, and this little repository had been opened for their use.

When they have seen the little Morgans safe into their old brown house—very often it is John Morgan who comes to the door to admit them—(John is the eldest son, the curate, the tutor, the mainstay of the straggling establishment)—Dolly and her brother trudge home through the Square, followed by Mademoiselle, still lost in her novel. The lilacs are flowering behind the rusty rails, the children know every flagstone and window; they turn up a little shabby passage of narrow doorways and wide-eaved roofs, and so get out into the high-road again. They look up with friendly recognition at the little boy and girl in their quaint Dutch garb standing on their pedestals above the crowd as it passes the Vestry-hall; then they turn down a sunshiny spring lane, where ivy is growing, and brown bricks are twinkling in the western sun-

shine ; and they ring at a gateway where an iron bell is swung. The house is called Church House, and all its windows look upon gardens, along which the sunshine comes flowing. The light used to fill Dolly's slanting wooden school-room at the top of the house. When the bells were ringing, and the sun-flood came in and made shadows on the wall, it used to seem to her like a chapel full of music.

George wanted to make an altar one day, and to light Lady Sarah's toilet candles, and to burn the sandal-wood matches ; but Dolly, who was a little Puritan, blew the matches out and carried the candles back to their places.

"I shall go over to the Morgans," said George, "since you are so disagreeable."

Whether Dolly was agreeable or not, this was what George was pretty sure to do.

CHAPTER II.

DUTCH TILES.

THERE are many disconnected pictures in Dorothea Vanborough's gallery, drifting and following each other like the images of a dissolving-view. There are voices and faces changing, people whom she hardly knows to be the same appearing and disappearing. Looking back now-a-days through a score or two of years, Dorothea can see many lights crossing and reflecting one another, many strange places and persons in juxtaposition. She can hear, as we all can, a great clamour of words and of laughter, cries of pain and of sorrow and anger, through all of which sound the sacred voices that will utter to her through life—and beyond life she humbly prays.

Dorothea's pictures are but mist and fancy work, not made of paint and canvas as is that one which hangs over the fireplace in the wainscot dining-room at Church House in Kensington, where my heroine passed so much of her life. It is supposed by some to be a Van der Helst. It represents a golden brown grandmother, with a coiffe and a ruffle and a grand chain round her neck, and a ring on her forefinger, and a double-winged house in the background. This placid-faced Dutchwoman, existing two centuries ago, has some looks still living in the face of the Dorothea Vanborough of these days. Her descendants have changed their name and their dress, cast away their ruffles, forgotten the story of their early origin ; but there is still a something that tells of it : in Dolly's slow quaint grace and crumpled bronze hair, in her brother George's black brows, in their aunt Lady Sarah Francis' round brown eyes and big ears, to say nothing of her store of blue Dutch china. Tall blue pots, with dragon handles, are ranged in rows upon the chimney-board under the picture. On either side of the flame below are blue tiles, that Lady Sarah's husband brought over from

the Hague the year before he died. Abraham, Jonah, Noah, Balaam tumbling off his blue ass ; the whole sacred history is there, lighted up by the flaring flame of the logs.

When first George and Dolly came to live in the old house, then it was the pictures came to life. The ass began to call out Balaam ! Balaam ! The animals to walk two by two (all blue) into the ark. Jonah's whale swallowed and disgorged him night after night, as George and Dolly sat at their aunt's knee listening to her stories in the dusk of the "children's hour ;" and the vivid life that childhood strikes even into inanimate things, awakened the widow's dull heart and the silent house in the old by-lane in Kensington.

The lady over the fireplace had married in King Charles's reign : she was Dorothea Vanborough and the first Countess of Churchtown. Other countesses followed in due course, of whom one or two were engraved in the passage overhead ; the last was a miniature in Lady Sarah's own room, her mother and my heroine's grandmother ; a beautiful and wilful person, who had grievously offended by taking a second husband soon after her lord's demise in 1806. This second husband was himself a member of the Vanborough family, a certain Colonel Stanham Vanborough, a descendant of the lady over the chimney-piece. He was afterwards killed in the Peninsula. Lady Sarah bitterly resented her mother's marriage, and once said she would never forgive it. It was herself that she never forgave for her own unforgiveness. She was a generous-hearted woman, fantastic, impressionable, reserved. When her mother died soon after Colonel Vanborough, it was to her own home that Lady Sarah brought her little step-brother, now left friendless, and justly ignored by the peerage, where the elder sister's own life was concisely detailed as "dau. John Vanborough, last Earl of Churchtown, b. 1790, m. 1807, to Darby Francis, Esq., of Church House, Kensington."

Young Stanham Vanborough found but a cold welcome from Mr. Francis, but much faithful care and affection, lavished, not without remorse, by the sister who had been so long estranged. The boy grew up in time, and went out into the world, and became a soldier as his father had been. He was a simple, straightforward youth, very fond of his sister, and loth to leave her, but very glad to be his own master at last. He married in India, the daughter of a Yorkshire baronet, a pretty young lady, who had come out to keep her brother's house. Her name was Philippa Henley, and her fortune consisted chiefly in golden hair and two pearly rows of teeth. The marriage was not so happy as it might have been ; trouble came, children died, the poor parents, in fear and trembling, sent their one little boy home to Lady Sarah to save his life. And then, some three years later, their little daughter Dolly was making her way, a young traveller by land and by sea coming from the distant Indian station where she had been born, to the shelter of the old house in the old by-lane in Kensington. The children found the door open wide and the lonely woman on her threshold looking out for them. Mr. Francis was dead,

and it was an empty house by this time, out of which a whole home had passed away. Lady Sarah's troubles were over, leaving little behind ; the silence of mid-life had succeeded to the loving turmoils and jealousies and anxieties of earlier days, only some memories remained of which the very tears and words seemed wanting now and then, although other people may have thought that if words failed the widow, the silent deeds were there that should belong to all past affection.

One of the first things Dolly remembers is a landing-place one bitter east-winded morning, with the white blast blowing dry and fierce from the land, and swirling out to sea through the leafless forest of shipping ; the squalid houses fast closed and double-locked upon their sleeping inmates ; the sudden storms of dust and wind ; the distant clanking of some awakening pail, and the bewildered ayah, in her rings and bangles, squatting on the ground and veiling her face in white muslin.

By the side of the ayah stands my heroine, a little puppy-like girl, staring as Indian children stare, at the strange dismal shores upon which they are cast ; staring at the lady in the grey cloak, who had come on board with her papa's face, and caught in her arms, and who is her Aunt Sarah ; at the big boy of seven in the red mittens, whose photograph her papa had shown her in the verandah, and who is her brother George ; at the luggage as it comes bumping and stumbling off the big ship ; at the passengers departing. The stout little gentleman, who used to take her to see the chickens, pats Dolly on the head, and says he shall come and see her ; the friendly sailor who carried her on shore shakes hands, and then the clouds close in, and the sounds and the faces disappear. . . .

Presently, into Dolly's gallery come pleasanter visions of the old house at Kensington, to which Lady Sarah took her straight away, with its brick wall, and ivy creepers, and many-paned windows, and the stone balls at either side of the door—on one of which a little dark-eyed girl is sitting, expecting them.

“Who is dat ?” says little three-year-old Dolly, running up, and pulling the child's pinafore, to make sure that she is *real*.

Children believe in many things, in fairies, and sudden disappearances ; they would not think it very strange if they were to see people turn to fountains and dragons in the course of conversation.

“That is a nice little girl like you,” said Lady Sarah, kindly.

“A nice little girl like me ?” said Dolly.

“Go away,” says the little strange girl, hiding her face in her hands.

“Have you come to play wiss me ? My name is Dolliciavable,” continues Dolly, who is not shy, and quite used to the world, having travelled so far.

“Is that your name ? What a funny name,” says the little girl, looking up. “My name is Rhoda, but they call me Dody at our house. I'se four years old.”

Dolly was three years old, but she could not speak quite plain ; she took the little girl's hand and stood by the ayah, watching the people passing and repassing, the carriage being unpacked, Lady Sarah directing and giving people money, George stumping about in everybody's way, and then, somehow, everything and everybody seems going up and down stairs, and in confusion ; she is very tired and sleepy, and forgets all the rest.

Next day Dolly wakes up crying for her mamma. It is not the ship any more. Everything is quite still, and her crib does not rock up and down. "I sought she would be here," said poor little Dolly, in a croaking, waking voice, sitting up with crumpled curls and bright warm cheeks. It is not her mamma, but Aunt Sarah, who takes her up and kisses her, and tries to comfort her, while the ayah, Nun Comee, who has been lying on the floor, jumps up and dances in her flowing white garment and snaps her black fingers, and George brings three tops to spin all at once. Dolly is interested, and ceases crying and begins to smile and to show all her little white teeth.

Lady Sarah rarely smiled. She used to frown so as not to show what she felt. But Dolly from the first day had seemed to understand her ; she was never afraid of her : and she used to jump on her knee and make her welcome to the nursery.

"Is you very pretty ?" said little Dolly one day, looking at the grim face with the long nose and pinched lips. "I think you is a very ugly aunt." And she smiled up in the ugly aunt's face.

"O Dolly ! how naughty !" said Rhoda, who happened to be in Dolly's nursery.

Rhoda was a little waif *protégée* of Lady Sarah's. She came from the curate's home close by, and was often sent in to play with Dolly, who would be lonely, her aunt thought, without a companion of her own age ; Rhoda was Mr. Morgan's niece, and a timid little thing ; she was very much afraid at first of Dolly ; so she was of the ayah, with her brown face and earrings and monkey hands ; but soon the ayah went back to India with silver pins in her ears, taking back many messages to the poor child-bereft parents, with a pair of Dolly's shoes, as a remembrance, and a couple of dolls for herself as a token of goodwill from her young mistress. They were for her brothers, Nun Comee said, but it was supposed that she intended to worship them on her return to her native land.

The ayah being gone, little Rhoda soon ceased to be afraid of Dolly, the kind, merry, helpful little playmate, who remained behind, frisking along the passages and up and down the landing-places of Church House. She was much nicer, Rhoda thought, than her own real cousins the Morgans in Old Street.

As days go by, Dolly's pictures warm and brighten from early spring into summer-time. By degrees they reach above the table and over and beyond the garden-roller. They are chiefly of the old garden, whose brick walls seem to enclose sunshine and gaudy flowers all the summer

through ; of the great Kensington parks, where in due season chestnuts are to be found shining among the leaves and dry grasses ; of the pond, where the ducks are flapping and diving ; of the house, which was little Rhoda's home. This was the great bare house in Old Street, with plenty of noise, dried herbs, content, children without end, and thick bread-and-butter. There was also cold stalled ox on Sundays at one.

In those days life was a simple matter to the children ; their days and their legs lengthened together ; they loved, they learned, and they looked for a time that was never to be—when their father and mother should come home and live with them again, and everybody was to be happy. As yet the children thought they were only expecting happiness.

George went to school at Frant, near Tunbridge Wells, and came home for the holidays. Dolly had a governess too, and she used to do her lessons with little Rhoda in the slanting schoolroom at the top of Church House. The little girls did a great many sums, and learnt some French, and read little Arthur's *History of England* to everybody's satisfaction.

Kind Lady Sarah wrote careful records of the children's progress to her brother, who had sent them to the faithful old sister at home. He heard of the two growing up with good care and much love in the sunshine that streamed upon the old garden ; playing together on the terrace that he remembered so well ; pulling up the crocuses and the violets that grew in the shade of the white holly-tree. George was a quaint, clever boy, Sarah wrote ; Dolly was not so quick, but happy and obedient, and growing up like a little spring flower among the silent old bricks.

Lady Sarah also kept up a desultory correspondence with Philippa, her sister-in-law. Mrs. Vanborough sent many minute directions about the children ; Dolly was to dine off cold meat for her complexion's sake, and she wished her to have her hair crimped ; and George was to wear kid-gloves and write a better hand ; and she hoped they were very good, and that they sometimes saw their cousin Robert, and wrote to their uncle, Sir Thomas Henley, Henley Court, Smokethwaite, Yorkshire : and she and dear papa often and often longed for their darlings. Then came presents—a spangled dress for Lady Sarah, and silver ornaments for Dolly, and an Indian sword for George, with which he nearly cut off Rhoda's head.

CHAPTER III.

TO OLD STREET BY THE LANES.

In those days, as I have said, the hawthorn spread across the fields and market-gardens that lay between Kensington and the river. Lanes ran to Chelsea, to Fulham, to North End, where Richardson once lived and wrote in his garden-house. The mist of the great city hid the horizon and dulled the sound of the advancing multitudes ; but close at hand, all round about the old house, were country corners untouched—blossoms

instead of bricks in spring-time, summer shade in summer. There were strawberry-beds, green, white, and crimson in turn. The children used to get many a handful of strawberries from Mr. Penfold, the market-gardener at the end of the lane, and bunches of radish when strawberries were scarce. They gathered them for themselves on a bank where paving-stones and coal-holes are now and a fine growth of respectable modern villas. I believe that in those days there were sheep grazing in Kensington Gore. It is certain that Mr. Penfold kept Alderneys in the field beyond his orchard; and that they used to come and drink in a pond near his cottage. He lived with his wife and his daughter, under an old tiled roof, and with a rose-tree growing on the wall. In the window of the cottage a little card was put up, announcing that "Curds-and-whey were to be had within," and the children sometimes went there to drink the compound out of Emma Penfold's doll's tea-things. The old pond was at the garden-gate; there was a hedge round about it, and alder-trees starting up against the sunset, and the lanes, and orchards beyond. The water reflected the sunset in the sky and the birds flying home to the sound of the evening bells. Sometimes Emma would come out of the cottage, and stand watching the children play. She was a pretty girl, with rosy cheeks and dark soft eyes. It was a quaint old corner, lonely enough in the daytime; but of evenings, people would be passing—labourers from their work, strollers in the fields, neighbours enjoying the air. The cottage must have been as old as Church House itself. It was chiefly remarkable for its beautiful damask rose-trees, of which the red leaves sprinkled the threshold, across which pretty Emma Penfold would step. I think it was for the sake of the rose-tree that people sometimes stopped and asked for curds-and-whey. Emma would dispense the horrible mixture, blushing beneath her basket-work plaits.

Mr. Penfold was a well-to-do man. At the end of his garden a wicket-gate led into the orchard, where Dolly and Rhoda went sometimes to play in the long grass beneath the fruit-trees, while overhead was a Raphael-like trellis of blue sky and twisted branches and singing birds, beneath which the children disported, while their attendant, Marker, stood gossiping with Mrs. Penfold over the gate. Only the other day I saw the last of the old apple-trees peacefully flowering with the blossom of never-to-be-apples, while an engine was at work upon the roots, and draining the land for a new terrace and a macadamized road.

Sometimes in May mornings the children would gather hawthorn branches out of the lanes, and make what they liked to call garlands for themselves. The white blossoms looked pretty in Rhoda's dark hair; and Mademoiselle, coming to give them their music-lesson, would find the little girls crowned with May-flower wreaths. It was hard work settling down to lessons on those days. How slowly the clocks ticked when the practice hour began; how the little birds would come hopping on the window-ledge, before Dolly had half finished her sum; how cruel it was of Mademoiselle to pull down the blind and frighten the poor little

birds away. Many pictures in Dolly's gallery belong to this bit of her life. It seems one long day as she looks back to it, for when the sun set Dolly too used to be put to bed.

As for little Rhoda she would be sent back to Old Street. When prayers were over, long after Dolly was asleep, she would creep upstairs alone to the very top of the house, and put herself to bed and blow out her own candle if Zoe did not come for it. How bare and chill and lonely it was to be all by oneself at the top of that busy house! "I don't think they would come, even if I screamed," Rhoda would think as she lay staring at the cupboard-door, and wondering if there was any one behind it.

Once the door burst open and a great cat jumped out, and Rhoda's shriek brought up one of John Morgan's pupils, who had been reading in his room.

"Is anything the matter?" said the young man at the door.

"Oh, no, no—o! Please don't say I screamed?" said little Rhoda, disappearing under the bed-clothes.

"Silly child!" (This was Aunt Morgan's voice in the passage.) "Thank you, Mr. Raban, I will go to her. A little girl of ten years old frightened at a cat! For shame, Rhoda! There—go to sleep directly," and her Aunt Morgan vigorously tucked her up and gave her a kiss.

The Morgans were a cheerful and noisy household; little Rhoda lived there, but she scarcely seemed to belong to it: she was like a little cuckoo born into some strange nest full of active, early, chirping birds, all bigger and stronger than herself. The Rev. John Morgan was master of the nest, which his mother kept in excellent order and ruled with an active rod. There were two pupils, two younger brothers, two sisters, and Rhoda Parnell, the forlorn little niece they had adopted. Downstairs the fat parlour-maid, and the old country cook were established, and a succeeding generation of little charity-boys, who were expected by Mrs. Morgan to work in the garden, go errands, and learn their catechisms, while blacking the young gentlemen's boots in a vault-like chamber set apart for that purpose.

Mrs. Morgan was a thrifty woman, and could not bear to think of time or space being wasted, much less comestibles. Her life had been one long course of early rising, moral and physical rectitude. She allowed John to sit in an arm-chair, but no one else if she could help it. When poor little Rhoda was tired, she used to go up to the room she shared with Zoe, her youngest cousin, and lie down on the floor. If Zoe told her mother a message would come immediately for Rhoda to help with the poor flannel.

This poor flannel was Mrs. Morgan's own kingdom. She used to preside over passive rolls of grey and blue. She could cut out any known garment in use in any civilized community. She knew the right side of the stuff, the right way to turn the scissors. She could contrive, direct, turn corners, snip, snap on occasions, talking the whole time; she was emphatic always. In her moments of relaxation she dearly loved a whisper. She wore a front of curls with a velvet band and Kensington-

made gowns and shoes. Cassie and Zoe, when they grew up to be young ladies, used to struggle hard for Knightsbridge fashions. The Kensington style was prim in those days. The ladies wore a dress somewhat peculiar to themselves and cut to one pattern by the Misses Trix in their corner house. There was a Kensington world (I am writing of twenty years ago) somewhat apart from the big uneasy world surging beyond the turnpike—a world of neighbours bound together by the old winding streets and narrow corners in a community of venerable elm-trees and bricks and traditions that are almost levelled away. Mr. Awl, the bootmaker, in High Street, exhibited peculiar walking-shoes long after high-heels and kid brodekins had come into fashion in the metropolis. The last time I was in his shop I saw a pair of the old-fashioned, flat, sandalled shoes, directed to Miss Vieutemps, in Palace Green. Tippets, poke-bonnets, even a sedan-chair, still existed among us long after they had been discarded by more active minds. In Dolly's early days, in Kensington Square itself, high-heels and hoops were not unknown; but these belonged to ladies of some pretension, who would come in state along the narrow street leading from the Square, advancing in powder, and hoops, and high-heeled shoes—real hoops, real heels, not modern imitations, but relics unchanged since the youth of the ghost-like old sisters. They lived in a tall house, with a mansard roof. As the children passed they used to look up at the cobweb-windows, at the narrow doorway with its oaken dais, and the flagged court, and the worn steps. Lady Sarah told Dolly that Mrs. Francis had known Talleyrand, when he was living there in one of the old houses of the Square. At any time it would be easy to conjure up ghosts of great people with such incantations of crumbling wall and oaken device and panel. Not Talleyrand only, but a whole past generation, still lives for us among these quaint old ruins.

The Kensington tradespeople used to be Conservative, as was natural, with a sentry in the High Street, and such a ménagerie of lions and unicorns as that which they kept over their shop-fronts. They always conversed with their customers while they measured a yard of silk or sold a skein of thread across their counters. Dolly would feel flattered when Mr. Baize found her grown. Even Lady Sarah would graciously reply to his respectful inquiries after her health on the rare occasions when she shopped herself. Mrs. Morgan never trusted anybody with her shopping.

"I always talk to Baize," she would say, complacently, coming away after half-an-hour's exchange of ideas with that respectable man. She would repeat his conversation for the benefit of her son and his pupils at tea-time. "I think tradespeople are often very sensible and well-informed persons," said Mrs. Morgan, "when they do not forget themselves, Mr. Raban. Radical as you are, you must allow that Kensington tradespeople are always respectful to the clergy—our position is too well established; they know what is due to us," said Mrs. Morgan, gravely.

"They don't forget what is due to themselves," said Mr. Raban, with an odd sort of smile.

"That they don't," said Robert Henley, who was Morgan's other pupil at that time. "I daresay Master George wishes they would ; he owes a terrible long bill at Baize's for ties and kid-gloves."

Presently came a ring at the bell. "Here he is," cries John, starting up hastily. "No more tea, thank you, mother."

George Vanborough used also to read with John Morgan during the holidays. The curate's energy was unfailing ; he slaved, taught, panted, and struggled for the family he had shouldered. What a good fellow he was ! Pack clouds away, no shades or evil things should come near him as he worked ; who ever piped to him that he did not leap, or call to him that he did not shout in answer. With what emphasis he preached his dull Sunday sermon, with what excitement he would to his admiring sisters and mother read out his impossible articles in the *Vestryman's Magazine* or elsewhere, how liberally he dashed and italicised his sentences, how gallantly he would fly to his pen or his pulpit in defence of friend or in attack of foe (the former being flesh and blood, and the latter chiefly spiritual). And then he was in love with a widow—how he admired her blue and pink eyes ; he could not think of marrying until the boys were out in the world and the girls provided for. But with Joe's wit and Tom's extraordinary powers, and the girls' remarkable amiability, all this would surely be settled in the course of a very short time.

The Morgan family was certainly a most united and affectionate clan. I don't know that they loved each other more than many people do, but they certainly believed in each other more fervently. They had a strange and special fascination for George, who was not too young to appreciate the curate's unselfishness.

The younger Morgans, who were a hearty, jolly race, used to laugh at George. Poor boy, he had already begun to knock his head, young as it was, against stone walls ; his schoolfellows said he had cracked it with his paradoxes. At twelve he was a stout fellow for his age, looking older than he really was. He was slow and clumsy, he had a sallow complexion, winking blue eyes, a turn-up nose, and heavy dark eyebrows ; there was something honest and almost pathetic at times in the glance of these blue eyes, but he usually kept them down from shyness as well as from vanity, he didn't dare look in people's faces, he thought he should see them laughing at him. He was very lazy, as sensitive people often are ; he hated games and active amusements ; he had a soft melancholy voice that was his one endowment, besides his gift for music ; he could work when he chose, but he was beginning life in despair with it, and he was not popular among his companions ; they called him conceited, and they were right ; but it was a melancholy conceit, if they had but known it. The truth was, however, that he was too ugly, too clever, too clumsy to get on with boys of a simpler and wholesomer mind. Even John Morgan, his friend and preceptor, used to be puzzled about him and distressed at times. "If George Vanborough were only more like his own brothers, there would be something to be done with him,"

thought honest John as those young gentlemen's bullet-heads passed the window where the pupil and his preceptor were at work. If only—there would be a strange monotony in human nature, I fancy, if all the "if onlys" could be realized, and we had the moulding of one another, and pastors and masters could turn assenting pupils out by the gross like the little chalk rabbits Italian boys carry about for sale.

Dolly was very well contented with her brother just as he was. She trusted his affection, respected his cleverness, and instinctively guessed at his vanities and morbidities. Even when she was quite a child, Dolly, in her sweet downright way, seemed to have the gift of healing the wounds of her poor St. Sebastian, who, when he was a little boy, would come home day after day smarting and bleeding with the arrows of his tormentors. These used to be, alternately, Lady Sarah herself, Cassie Morgan, and Zoe, the two boys when they were at home for the holidays, and little Rhoda, whom he declared to be the most malicious of them all. The person who treated George with most sympathy and confidence was Mrs. Morgan, that active and garrulous old lady, to whom anybody was dear who would listen to the praises of her children.

Robert Henley, as I have said, was also studying with John Morgan. He had just left Eton. Lady Sarah asked him to Church House at her sister-in-law's request; but he did not often find time to come and see them. He used to be tramping off to Putney, where he and his friend Frank Raban kept a boat; or they would be locked up together with ink and blots and paper in John Morgan's study. Raban was older than Henley. He was at College, but he had come up for a time to read for his degree.

Old Betty the cook at John Morgan's, was a Yorkshire woman, and she took a motherly interest in the pupils. She had much to say about young Mr. Raban, whose relations she knew in Yorkshire. Betty used to call Frank Raban a "noist young man."

"He's Squoire's hair and grandsun loike," she told Rhoda and Dolly one day. "They cannot do n' less nor roast a hox when 'a cooms t' hage."

After this Rhoda used to stand on tiptoe and respectfully peep through the study-window at the heads and the books and the tobacco-smoke within; but there was a big table in the way, and she could never see much more than her own nose reflected in the glass. Once or twice, when George was in the way, as a great favour he would be allowed to accompany the young men in one of their long expeditions in big boots. They would come home late in the evening, tired and hungry and calling out for food. At whatever hour they came old Betty had a meal of cold meat and cake for them, of which George partook with good appetite. At Church House, if George was late for dinner he had to wait for tea and thin bread-and-butter at eight o'clock. Lady Sarah, who had fought many a battle for George's father, now—from some curious retrospective feeling—seemed to feel it her duty to revive many of her late husband's peculiarities, and one of them was that nothing was to be allowed to interfere with the

routine of the house. Routine there was none at the curate's, although there were more hours, perhaps, than in any other house in Old Street. The sun rose and set, the seasons drifted through the back garden in changing tints and lights, each day brought its burden, and the dinner-time was shifted to it.

CHAPTER IV.

AN AFTERNOON AT PENFOLD'S.

To this day Dolly remembers the light of a certain afternoon in May when all was hot and silent and sleepy in the old school-room at Church House. The boards cracked, the dust-motes floated; down below, the garden burnt with that first summer glow of heat that makes a new world out of such old, well-worn materials as twigs, clouds, birds, and the human beings all round us. The little girls had been at work, and practised, and multiplied, and divided again; they had recollected various facts connected with the reign of Richard the Second. Mademoiselle had suppressed many a yawn, Dolly was droning over her sum—six and five made thirteen—over and over again. "That I should have been, that thou shouldst have been, that he shouldst have been," drawled poor little Rhoda. Then a great fly hums by, as the door opens, and Lady Sarah appears with a zigzag of sunlight shooting in from the passage—a ray of hope. Lady Sarah has her bonnet on, and a sort of put-away-your-lessons,-children face.

Is there any happiness like that escape on a summer's day from the dull struggle with vacuity, brown paper-covered books, dates, ink-blots, cramps, and crotchetts, into the open air of birds, sounds, flowers, liberty everywhere? As the children come out into the garden with Lady Sarah, two butterflies are flitting along the terrace. The Spanish jessamine has flowered in the night, and spreads its branches out fragrant with its golden drops. Lady Sarah gathers a sprig and opens her parasol. She is carrying a book and a shawl, and is actually smiling. The pigeons go whirring up and down from their pigeon-cote high up in the air. Four o'clock comes sounding across the ivy-wall, the notes strike mellow and distinct above the hum of human insects out and about. Half Lady Sarah's district is sunning itself on the door-steps, children are squatting in the middle of the road. The benches are full in Kensington Gardens, so are the steamers on the river. To these people walking in their garden there comes the creaking sound of a large wheelbarrow, and at the turn of the path they discover Mr. Penfold superintending a boy and a load of gravel. Mr. Penfold is a cheerful little man, with gloomy views of human nature. According to Penfold's account there were those (whoever they might be) who was always a plotting against you. They was hup to everything, and there was no saying what they was not at the bottom of.

But Penfold could be heven with them, and he kep' hisself to hisself, and named no names. Dolly felt grateful to these unknown beings when she heard Mr. Penfold telling Lady Sarah they had said as how that Miss Dorothea 'ad been makin' hinquiry respectin' of some puppies. He did not know as how she wished it generally know'd, but he might mention as he 'ad two nice pups down at his place, and Miss Dorothea was welcome to take her choice.

It is a dream Dolly can scarcely trust herself to contemplate. Lady Sarah does not say no, but she looks at her watch, telling Dolly to run back to the house, and see if the post is come in, and continues graciously, "I am much obliged to you, Penfold; I have no doubt Miss Dorothea will be glad to have one of your puppies. What is your daughter doing. Is she at home?"

"Yes, my lady," says Penfold, mysteriously pointing over his shoulder with his thumb. "They would have 'ad us send the gurl away, but she is a good gurl, though she takes her own way, and there are those as puts her hup to it."

"We all like our own way, without anybody's suggestions," said Lady Sarah, smiling. Then Dolly comes flying from the house, and tumbles over a broom-stick, so that she has to stop to pick up her handful of letters.

"Thank you, my dear: now if you like we will go and see the puppies," says Aunt Sarah. "No Indian letter" (in a disappointed voice.) "I wish your mother would—— Run on, Dolly."

So Dolly runs on with Rhoda, thinking of puppies, and Lady Sarah follows thinking of her Indian letter, which is lying under the laurel-tree where Dolly dropped it, and where Penfold presently spies it out and picks it up, unconscious of its contents. After examining the seal and some serious thought, he determines to follow the trio. They have been advancing in the shadow of the hedges, through the gaps of which they can see people at work in the sunshiny cabbage-fields. Then they come to Earl's Court, and its quaint old row of houses, with their lattices stuffed with spring-flowers, and so to the pond by the road-side (how cool and deep it looked as they passed by), and then by the wicket-gate they wander into the orchard, of which some of the trees are still in flower, and where Lady Sarah is soon established on the stump of a tree. Her magazine pages flutter as the warm, sweet winds come blowing from across the fields—the shadows travel on so quietly that you cannot tell when they go or whither. There is no sound but a little calf bleating somewhere. Rhoda is picking daisies in the shade, Dolly is chirping to herself by the hedge that separates the orchard from the Penfolds' garden. There is a ditch along one part of the hedge, with a tangle of grass and dock-leaves and mallows; a bird flies out of the hedge, close by Dolly's nose, and goes thrilling and chirping up into the sky, where the stars are at night; the daisies and buttercups look so big, the grass is so long and so green; there are two purple flowers with long stalks close at hand, but

Dolly does not pick them ; her little heart seems to shake like the bird's song, it is all so pretty ; the May blossom is as big as her hand, the dandelions are like lamps burning. She tries to think she is a bird, and that she lives in the beautiful hedges.

From behind the hawthorn hedge some voices come that Dolly should certainly know. . . .

" You'll believe me another time," cries some one, with a sort of sniff, and speaking in tones so familiar that Dolly, without an instant's hesitation, sets off running to the wicket-gate, which had been left open, and through which she now sees, as she expects, George with his curly head and his cricketing-cap standing in the Penfolds' garden, and with him her cousin Robert, looking very tall as he leans against a paling, and talks to Mrs. Penfold. There is also another person whom Dolly recognizes as Mr. Raban, and she thinks of the " hox," as she gazes with respect at the pale young man with his watch-chain and horseshoe pin. He has a straw hat and white shoes and a big knobstick in his hand, and nodding to Robert, he strides off towards the cottage. Dolly watches him as he walks in under the porch : no doubt he is going to drink curds and whey, she thinks.

" Why, Dolly ! are *you* here ?" says Robert, coming towards her.

" Missy is often here," says Mrs. Penfold, looking not over-pleased. " Is Mrs. Marker with you, my dear ?"

Dolly would have answered, but from the farther end of the garden behind Mrs. Penfold, two horrible apparitions advance, rusty black, with many red bobs and tassels dangling, and deliberate steps and horrible crinkly eyes. Old Betty would call them Bubbly Jocks ; Dolly has no name for them, but shrinks away behind her big cousin.

" Here are Dolly's bogies," says George, who is giving himself airs on the strength of his companionship and his short cut. " Now then, Dolly, they are going to bite like ghosts."

" Don't," cried Dolly.

" Are you afraid of turkeys, Dolly ! Little girls of eight years old shouldn't be afraid of anything," said Rhoda, busy with her flowers. Alas ! Rhoda's philosophy is not always justified by subsequent experience. It is second-hand, and quoted from Mrs. Morgan.

" We are going to see the puppies," says Dolly, recovering her courage as the turkey-cocks go by. " Won't you come, Robert ?"

" Puppies ! " said Robert. " We have plenty of them at the Court. My Aunt Henley says she prefers them to her own children."

" So should I," says Dolly, opening her eyes.

Presently Robert and Dolly come back, with two little fuzzy heads wildly squeaking from Dolly's lap, and old Bunch, the mother of the twins, following, half agonized, half radiant. They set the little staggering bundles down upon the ground, and Dolly squats in admiration while Robert goes off upon his business, and Mrs. Penfold hurries back into the house as Mr. Penfold appears crossing the lane.

Mr. Penfold was gone : Dolly was still watching with all-absorbed eyes, when the boy started up. "I say, Dolly ! look there at Aunt Sarah."

Aunt Sarah ! What had come to her, and how strange she looked walking through the orchard with a curious rapid step, and coming towards the open wicket-gate, through which the children could see her. Her bonnet was falling off her face, her hair was pushed back, she came very quick, straight on, looking neither to the right nor to the left, with her fixed eyes and pale cheeks. Penfold seemed hurrying after her ; he followed Lady Sarah into the garden, and then out again into the road. She hardly seemed to know which way she went.

What had happened ? Why didn't she answer when Dolly called her ? As she passed so swiftly, the children thought that something must have happened ; they did not know what. George set off running after her ; Dolly waited for a minute.

" Why did she look so funny ? " said Rhoda, coming up.

" I don't know, " said Dolly, almost crying.

" She had a black-edged letter in her hand, " said Rhoda, " that Mr. Penfold brought. When people think they are going to die they write and tell you on black paper."

Then Mrs. Penfold came running out of the cottage with a shriek, and the children running too, saw the gardener catch Aunt Sarah in his arms, as she staggered and put out her hands. When they came up, she lay back in his arms scarce conscious, and he called to them to bring some water from the pond. No wonder Dolly remembered that day, and Aunt Sarah lying long and straight upon the grass by the road-side. The letter had fallen from her hand, they threw water upon her face ; it wetted her muslin dress, and her pale cheeks ; a workman crossing from the field, stood and looked on awhile ; and so did the little children from the carpenter's shed up the road, gazing with wondering eyes at the pale lady beginning to move again at last and to speak so languidly.

The labourer helped to carry her into the cottage as she revived. George had already run home for Marker. Dolly and Rhoda, who were shut out by Mrs. Penfold, wandered disconsolately about the garden and into the orchard again, where Aunt Sarah's parasol was lying under the tree, and her book thrown face downwards : presently the little girls came straggling back with it to the garden-house once more.

The parlour door was shut close when they reached it, the kitchen door was open. What was that shrill shivering cry ? Who could it be ? Perhaps it was some animal, thought Dolly.

In the kitchen some unheeded pot was cooking and boiling over ; the afternoon sun was all hot upon the road outside, and Bunch and the puppies had lain down to sleep in a little heap on the step of the house.

Long, long after Dolly remembered that day, everything as it happened : Marker's voice inside the room ; young Mr. Raban passing by the end of the lane talking to Emma Penfold. (Mrs. Penfold had unlocked

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Long, long after Dolly remembered that day, everything as it happened : Marker's voice inside the room ; young Mr. Raban passing by the end of the lane talking to Emma Penfold. (Mrs. Penfold had unlocked

the back-door, and let them out.) After a time the shrill sobs ceased; then a clock struck, and the boiling pot in the kitchen fell over with a great crash, and Rhoda ran to see, and at that moment the parlour door opened, and Lady Sarah came out, very pale still and very strange, leaning, just as if she was old, upon Marker and Mr. Penfold. But she started away and seemed to find a sudden strength, and caught Dolly up in her arms. "My darling, my darling," she said, "you have only me now—only me. Heaven help you, my poor, poor children." And once more she burst into the shrill sighing sobs. It was Aunt Sarah who had been crying all the time for her brother who was dead.

This was the first echo of a mourning outcry that reached the children. They were told that the day was never to come now of which they had spoken so often; their father would never come home—they were orphans. George was to have a tall hat with crape upon it. Marker went into town to buy Dolly stuff for a new black frock. Aunt Sarah did not smile when she spoke to them, and told them that their mamma would soon be home now. Dolly could not understand it all very well. Their father had been but a remembrance; she did not remember him less because Lady Sarah's eyes were red and the letters were edged with black. Dolly didn't cry the first day, though Rhoda did; but in the night when she woke up with a little start and a moan from a dream in which she thought it was her papa who was lying by the pond, Aunt Sarah herself came and bent over her crib.

But next morning the daisies did not look less pretty, nor did the puppy cease to jump, nor, if the truth be told, did Dolly herself; nor would kind Stanham Vanborough have wished it . . .

Robert came into the garden and found the children with a skipping-rope, and was greatly shocked, and told them they should not skip about.

"I was not skipping," said Rhoda. "I was turning the rope for Dolly."

Dolly ran off, blushing. Had she done wrong? She had not thought so. I cannot say what dim unrealized feelings were in her little heart; longings never to be realized, love never to be fulfilled. She went up into her nursery, and hid there in a corner until Rhoda came to find her, and to tell her dinner was ready.

CHAPTER V.

STEEL PENS AND GOOSE QUILLS.

THE letter announcing poor Stanham's death came from a Captain Palmer, a friend of Stan's, whose ship was stationed somewhere in that latitude, and who happened to have been with him at the time. They had been out boar-hunting in the marshes near Calcutta. The poor Major's illness was but a short one, produced by sunstroke, so the Captain wrote. His affairs were in perfect order. He had been handsomely noticed in the Bengal

Hurkaru. Of his spiritual state Captain Palmer felt less able to speak. Although not a professed Christian, poor Stanham had for some time past attended the services of the Scotch chapel at Dum Dum, where Mr. McFlaggit had been permitted to awaken many sleepers to a deep sense of spiritual unrest. Captain Palmer believed that Major Vanborough had insured his life for 2,000*l.*, and the widow and children would also be entitled to something from the regimental fund. Captain Palmer then went on to say that he had been attending another deathbed, that of a native gentleman, whose wives and orphan children having been left unprovided for, had been happily brought to see the past errors of their faith and had come forward in a body. They were about to be sent to England under the charge of Miss M'Grudder, who had done so much good work among the Zenanas. Captain Palmer wound up by a friendly offer of assistance and a message from Mrs. Vanborough. She did not feel equal to writing, she was utterly prostrate. She sent fondest love, and would write by the next mail.

So this was the children's first taste of the fruit of the tree of life and death growing in that garden of Eden and childhood through which we all come wandering into life, a garden blooming still,—it may be, in the square before the house,—where little Adams and Eves still sport, innocent and uncareful for the future, gathering the fruits as they ripen in the sunshine, hearing voices and seeing their childish visions, naming the animals as a new creation passes before them.

Lady Sarah longed to get away when her first burst of grief was over. The sleepy drowsy old place seemed to stifle her with its calm content and sunny indifference. But she wanted to hear more of Philippa's plans before she formed any of her own, and meanwhile she could cry unobserved within the old walls where she had loved poor Stan, and seen him grow up from a boy; no wonder, no triumphant paragon; but a kindly, gentle, simple creature, whom she had loved with all her heart, as Dolly now loved George, and without whom the world seemed a wanting place—though there were many wiser and more brilliant men left in it than poor Stanham Vanborough. Robert, after some incompetent attempts at consolation, was obliged to return to Cambridge.

Poor Mrs. Vanborough's "plans" were rather vague, and all crossed one another and came on different scraps of papers, contradicting and utterly bewildering, though good Lady Sarah had docketed them and tied them up together for more convenient reference. They were to write to her by every post, Philippa said. Why could not they come to her? She longed for her children. She scarcely knew how to bear her sorrow. She dreaded the journey, the cold, empty home-coming, the life in England, so different from what she had dreamed. The Doctor said it would be madness for her to move as yet. Her brother, Colonel Henley ("Dear Charles! he was goodness itself"), suggested Italy. Would Lady Sarah consent to this, and meet her with the children? Or would she

even come as far as Paris ? But there were difficulties in everything everywhere—cruel money difficulties, she was told. There was a lawsuit now coming on in the Calcutta Courts with the insurance office in which poor dear Stan had insured his life. Captain Palmer said her presence was necessary. If it was given against her, she was utterly penniless ; and, meanwhile, harassed, detained. . . . Perhaps, on her return, she might take boarders or Indian children—would Lady Sarah advertise at once. . . . ? What did George advise ? When should she see them all again ? Her heart yearned in vain—months might elapse. Dependence she could not bear. Even Sarah's kindness was bitter to her, when she thought of the past. All were kind—all was sad. The poor thing seemed utterly distracted.

Lady Sarah had written that Church House was her home, and that she must come at once to her home and her children.

Mrs. Vanborough wrote that this could not be. Alas, alas ! it was only a bright dream, from which she sometimes awoke (so Philippa wrote) to find herself a mourner in a foreign land, watching the slow progress of the law.

“ Why didn't she come ? ” wrote Lady Henley from the Court. “ When will she come ? ” the children asked. Her room was ready, the bed was made, the fire burning. Dolly used to pick nosegays for her mamma's toilet-table, and stick pins in the cushion in stars. She made little bags of lavender to scent the great cabinet. It was one of those welcomes that are wasted in life, one of those guest-chambers made ready to which the guest does not come. There are many and many of them. They look just like any other rooms unless you know their history.

Dolly often followed Marker when she went in to see that all was in order. One day the fire blazed comfortably ; although the rain was beating against the window, a gleam of sun came from the inner dressing-room, that looked out cross-ways along the garden. “ Do you think she will come soon, Marker, ” Dolly asked, peeping about the room.

“ I don't think nothing at all, my dear, ” said Marker, poking the fire. “ Why don't you go and play with Miss Rhoda ? She came with Mrs. Morgan just now.”

“ Is Rhoda here ? ” cries Dolly, starting off instantly.

Rhoda was there ; she had come with her aunt, who was talking to Lady Sarah in the drawing-room.

Mrs. Morgan took a very long time to say what she had to say, and had left Rhoda outside in the hall. The little girls listened to Mrs. Morgan's voice as it went on, and on, and on. They sat on the stairs and played at being ladies too, and Rhoda told Dolly a great many secrets that she was not to tell, in a mysterious whisper just like her aunt's. Mr. Raban was gone away, she said, and he had married somebody, and Aunt Morgan said she should never speak to him again, and Mrs. Penfold came crying, and Aunt Morgan scolded and scolded, and Rhoda

thought Emma Penfold was gone too, and just then the drawing-room door opened ; Mrs. Morgan came out, looking very busy and hustled off with Rhoda. Lady Sarah cut Dolly's questions very short and forbade her going to the cottage again.

It was the very next day that Dolly and Rhoda met old Penfold walking in the lane, as they were coming home with Mademoiselle.

Gumbo ran to meet him, barking, wagging his tail, and creeping along the ground with delight.

Penfold, who had been passing on, stooped to caress the puppy's head with his brown creased hand, and seeing Dolly, he nodded kindly to her as she walked by with Mademoiselle.

"Has Emma come home to the cottage ?" asked Rhoda, lingering.

Penfold frowned. His honest red face turned crimson. "She's not come back, nor will she," he said. "She has got a 'usband now, and she is gone a-travellin', and if they hast you, you can tell them as I said so, Miss Rhoda, nor should I say otherwise if they was here to contradic' me." He spoke in a fierce defiant way. Mademoiselle called shrilly to the children to come on.

Dolly looked after the old gardener as he slowly walked away down the lane : he looked very old and tired, and she wished her aunt had not told her to keep away from the cottage.

Emma's name was never mentioned ; Raban's, too, was forgotten ; Mrs. Vanborough still delayed from one reason and another.

* * * * *

*From MRS. VANBOROUGH to the LADY SARAH FRANCIS, Church House,
Kensington.*

"Bugpore, April 1—, 18—.

"DEAREST SARAH,—

"I FEAR that you will be totally unprepared (not more so, however, than I was myself) for a great and sudden change in my life of sad regrets (sad and regretful it will ever be), notwithstanding the altered circumstances which fate has forced upon me during the last few months that I have spent in sorrowful retirement, with spirits and health shattered and nerves unstrung. During these long lonely months, weighed down by care and harassed by business, which I was utterly incapable of understanding, I know not what would have become of me if (during my brother's absence on regimental duties) it had not been for the unremitting attention and generous devotion of one without whose support I now feel I could not bring myself to face the struggle of a solitary life. For the sake of my poor fatherless children more even than for my own, I have accepted the name and protection of Captain Hawtry Palmer, of the Royal Navy, a sailor, of a family of sailors. Joanna, my brother's wife, was a Palmer, and from her I have often heard of Hawtry at a time when I little thought . . . You, dearest, who know me as I am, will rejoice that I have found rest and strength in another, though happiness I may not claim.

" Captain Palmer is a man of iron will and fervent principle. He must make *me* good, I tell him, unless sadness and resignation can be counted for goodness. Your poor Philippa is but a faulty creature, frail and delicate, and of little power; and yet, with all my faults, I feel that I am necessary to him, and, wreck as I am, there are those who do not utterly forget me. And, as he says with his quaint humour, there is not much to choose between the saints and sinners of the world. A thousand thousand kisses to my precious children. You will bring them to meet me next year, will you not, when Captain Palmer promises that I shall return to my real home—for your home is my home, is it not ?

" For the present, I remain on a visit to my friend Mrs. M'Grudder, an intimate friend of Captain Palmer, with one only daughter.

" The marriage will not, of course, take place for six weeks. Joanna will describe her brother to you. I am anxious to hear *all* she says about Hawtry and myself and our marriage.

" Ever, dearest Sarah,

Your very devoted

" PHILIPPA."

Poor Lady Sarah ! She read the letter one white, cold, east-windy day, when the sun shone, and the dry, parching wind blew the wreaths of dust along the ground. As she read the curious, heartless words, it seemed to her that the east wind was blowing into the room,—into her heart,—drying up all faith in life, all tears for the past, all hope for the future. Had she a heart, this cruel woman, poor Stan's wife and Dolly's mother ? Can women live and be loved, and bear children, and go through life without one human feeling, one natural emotion ; take every blessing of God, and every sacred sorrow, and live on, without knowing either the blessing or the sorrow ? Lady Sarah tore the letter up carefully and very quietly, for Dolly was by her side, and would have asked to see it. She was not angry just then, but cold and sad, unspeakably sad. " Poor woman ! " she thought, " was this all ; this the end of Stan's tender life devotion ; this the end of his pride and tender trust ? " She could see him now, whispering to Philippa, as they sat together on the old bench by the pond, a handsome pair, people said, and well suited. Well suited ! She got up shivering from her chair, and went to the fire, and threw the letter in, shred by shred, while the sun poured in fierce, and put out the flames.

" Are you cold, Aunt Sarah ? " said Dolly, coming to her side. Sarah moved away. She was afraid that even now it was burnt Dolly might read the cruel letter in the fire. " For my children's sake ! " The little red flames seemed to be crackling the words, as they smouldered among the coals, and a shrill, sudden blast against the window seemed hissing out that Captain Palmer was a man of iron will. As they stood side by side, Lady Sarah looked steadily away from little Dolly's eyes, and told her that her mamma was going to marry again.

Poor Dolly turned the colour of the little flames when her aunt told her. She said nothing, not even to Rhoda, nor to Mrs. Morgan, who called immediately upon hearing the rumour. Lady Sarah was not at home, but Mrs. Morgan came in all the same, and closely questioned Dolly upon the subject.

"What is the gentleman's name, my dear?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Dolly.

"Why, Mr. Palmer, to be sure," said Rhoda.

In due time the news came of the marriage, and then poor Aunt Sarah had to wipe her eyes, and to give up writing on black-edged paper. The clocks went round and round, and the earth rolled on, and seasons spread their feasts, and the winds swept them away in turn; summer burnt into autumn in cloud and vapour. The winter came closing in, and the snow fell thick upon the lanes and the gardens, on the Kensington house-tops and laurel-trees, on the old brown church with its square tower, and the curate's well-worn waterproof cape, as he trudged to and fro. It fell on the old garden walls and slanting roof of Church House, with little Dolly, safe sheltered within, warming herself by the baked Dutch tiles.

The Portuguese in Africa.

THE knowledge which the ancients had of Southern Africa was soon lost to the world ; and up to the time of the conquest of Northern Africa by the Saracens its Eastern shores had not been visited by Europeans beyond the Straits of Babelmandeb, and on the west they had sent no ship further south than the limits of Mauritania. For six centuries after the occupation of North Africa by the Saracens naval enterprise was almost unknown to Europe : but during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Portuguese and the Spaniards made themselves famous by maritime adventures. It was Prince Henry of Portugal, a nephew of our own Henry IV., who stimulated and directed this spirit of daring in his countrymen. At the beginning of the fifteenth century this prince, while engaged with his father in an expedition against the Moors of Barbary, obtained information which led him to think (1) that the boundaries of the Portuguese dominions might be greatly enlarged by the acquisition of territory in Western Africa, and (2) that a new way to India might be found by sailing round Africa, and so might be secured for Portugal the vast stores of wealth which had hitherto been at the exclusive command of Genoa and Venice. And, in 1415, he sent out an expedition consisting of two small ships to Western Africa, and thus inaugurated that wonderful series of geographical enterprises which terminated in the exploration of the whole coast-line of Africa, and the discovery of the long-sought passage to India. The prince did not live to see these great deeds accomplished ; he died in 1463, and it was not until 1498 that Vasco de Gama reached the coast of Malabar, and thus won a reputation amongst navigators only second to that of Columbus.

By the achievements of De Gama and his predecessors in this "great drama of discovery," and by the conquests of Albuquerque and others who succeeded him, the Portuguese obtained vast possessions both in Western and Eastern Africa. The southern portion of the continent they did not occupy, for then, as now, it was eminently an agricultural country, peopled by tribes of rude hardihood, and it offered, therefore, but few temptations to men who were urged by a desire to obtain power and to make wealth speedily ; but in the east and the west they were supreme. Nor were their possessions confined to the coasts. By degrees they obtained much land and important positions in the interior, partly by pushing forward their military establishments as opportunities offered, but chiefly through the instrumentality of their missionary priests, whose patriotic ardour was not less than their religious enthusiasm, and who, while striving for the conversion of the natives, were equally zealous for the aggrandisement of the Portuguese throne and nation. And for a time it seemed as though

Portugal would rise to the height of her grand opportunity, and build up in Eastern and Western Africa great colonial empires. But the present position of the Portuguese in Africa affords an illustration of the sad results of opportunities neglected and power abused, perhaps without a parallel in the world.

Of the Portuguese in Western Africa I have no personal knowledge : but from information which I have received from Dr. Livingstone and others who know them, I am very sure I do them no wrong by saying that, in no respect do they differ from their countrymen on the other side of the continent ;—and their personal acquaintance I have been privileged to make.

In Eastern Africa the Portuguese profess to hold the whole coast from Delagoa Bay to Cape Delgado, and important establishments and towns which extend for hundreds of miles inland along the course of the River Zambezi. Theoretically their form of government is excellent. There is a governor-general of Mozambique, having under him the governors of Quillimane and Inhambane, on the coast, and Sena, Tete, and Zumbo, on the Zambezi : and subordinate to them are lesser notabilities—Commandos they are called—who occupy positions as rulers of districts that have not yet been raised to the dignity of provinces. In alliance with these officials there are said to be judges and magistrates for the due administration of law, and a sufficient military force to protect the colonists from the incursions of the tribes of the interior. The instructions which the governors, major and minor, receive from Portugal express in high-flown language the most exalted sentiments. Never were the blessings of civilization and Christianity more eloquently set forth ; never was the duty of extending such blessings to the barbarous heathens more urgently enforced. The laws are faultless :—true, they recognise the right of the Portuguese to enslave the Africans when moved thereto by the necessity of the colony, yet the provisions which regulate the conduct of the master towards the slave are so admirably framed with reference to the well-being of the slave, that by them the slaves are shown to be far better off in all things than their brethren who are not in bondage. Theoretically nothing can be better than the position, the policy, and character of the Portuguese in Africa. Take the account which they give of themselves and you could but say of them,—Here is a highly civilized and Christian people, the worthy possessors of a glorious heritage, potent for good, great in that spirit of enterprise which makes light of difficulty and overcomes danger, using their grand capacity to develop the resources of the land, and to raise in the scale of humanity the barbarous races that have been brought under their power or within the scope of their influence.

And now for my experience of them.

When Livingstone brought the river Zambezi and its suitability as a commercial highway to the interior before the world, the Portuguese promptly declared that they were its legitimate guardians, and that they had established at its mouth a military force, a custom house, and all other appliances of civilization, for the protection of their rights and the encouragement of commerce. When I entered the Zambezi this is what

I saw,—a flag-staff from which flaunted the flag of Portugal, a rectangular house that would have been dignified by the mistaking it for an English cowshed, and a few huts such as the natives build. Of buildings domestic or governmental nothing more. The house was for the officer in command, the huts for the common soldiers, and such other people male or female as belonged to the settlement. The military consisted of Senhor A., the officer in question, a Portuguese sergeant, and six natives who were dressed in blue cotton uniforms, and armed with old muskets. I did not at first meet with Senhor A., but when I made his acquaintance he did honour to himself and his government by donning his uniform and parading his troops. The display was so amusingly absurd that I could scarcely refrain from laughter. The Senhor's perceptive faculties were large, he saw my difficulty, he divined its cause, and instead of resenting it, he sympathised, for after he had dismissed his soldiers, he held out his hand, and said,—“ You are amused at what you see. Well you may be. If I were not what I am I should be amused too. The position is very absurd.” Before I left the country, I saw much of this man. He was a gentleman by birth, and had been well educated. He knew something of Latin and Greek, spoke English, French, and Italian fluently, and was a fair mathematician. But he was a ruffian according to common report. In Portugal, by his reckless disregard of the conventionalities of life, I heard that he gained for himself an evil reputation, and to escape more unpleasant consequences had been obliged to migrate to Africa, where he was hated and shunned. I have, however, no reason to think that he was worse than many in Portugal, who with more discretion, managed to keep position, and in most things I found him infinitely the superior of the majority of his countrymen in Africa. His great offence with them was that he spoke of things as he knew them to be. He prided himself upon this, and on one occasion said to me,—“ I am a blackguard it is true; but in that I do not differ from my countrymen in this vile land; we are all blackguards together. But in one thing I do differ from them; they pretend to be better than they are; they are humbugs, hypocrites, all you like that is mean. I am not with them there. I hate humbug, and it is natural that humbugs should hate me. I care not. I take their hate as a compliment to my greater integrity.”

From this man I obtained much information upon the position which his countrymen now occupy in Africa. In reply to my inquiry as to what hold they had upon the land, he said,—“ Upon the land we have no hold. We have a few important positions on the coast, and a few unimportant places on the Zambezi; beyond that, nothing. Mozambique is our capital, in itself it is strong; for defence it is impregnable against all assaults from natives, and it might be as powerful for offence; but it is not. We are powerless beyond the precincts of the city. We cannot venture inland twenty miles from Mozambique without the consent of the natives. They are once more the masters of the soil, and they shut us up at will in our stronghold. Quillimane is better placed, the tribes about are more docile, and we are more free to move at our pleasure from thence.

Yet our power is but small, and were it not for the barrier which the Zambezi interposes, Quillimane would soon be destroyed by the Landeens (a branch of the Zulu Kaffir race) who keep all on this the south side of the river in a state of terror, and impose tribute upon us at will. Inham-bane is always in peril from the natives ; we cannot keep a foot of ground beyond it. Sena is in ruins ; Tete is powerless ; and at Zumbo you will but find the site of what was in the days of our prosperity a considerable town."

I inquired of the position of the Commandos, who were said to govern the land in those parts that were not immediately under the cognizance of the more regularly constituted authorities, and his reply was : " Humbug again ! There are certain men, it is true, who have made themselves powerful here and there, but with one exception they are in the position of rebels. There is Senhor V., for instance, who inherited from his father some money, and more than a thousand slaves. He is a man of enterprise, and not being content with the ordinary life of Quillimane, he armed many of his trustworthy slaves and made an expedition towards the Angoxa. He had to do some fighting, and being better armed than the natives, he did not fight in vain. He gained territory, built himself a stockade, an' by force and by fraud has become a great man. His will is law, and his followers obey him, and only him. But he has no wish to break with the government, and the government has no wish to break with him. He has free scope to do as he pleases, and the land he may gain is formally secured to him and to his successors for three lives, free from all taxation. This transaction is recorded in the archives of the government as another triumph of law and order, as another proof of the greatness of Portugal ; whereas V. is irresponsible, he does as he will, and if he were to die to-morrow, as his influence is purely personal, the old state of things would again prevail, our authority would not be recognised in any way. V. is not a rebel, but the others who are said to occupy his office are ; and they are the centres of a state of things which realises hell upon earth. There is Mariano and Belchioro. (It was Belchioro's marauders who murdered Captain Faulkner last year.) They are infamously notorious. They live amongst slaves and the natives whom they have subjected to their will, and who now pander to their desires. They outrage all law, human and divine, unchecked. They plunder the tribes, and they destroy where they are resisted. Their quest is ivory and slaves, by means of which they procure from their agents in Quillimane and Mozambique, who are generally government officers, wine and spirits, and such other things as their vices and wants make necessary. Sometimes they quarrel with one another, when they are near neighbours, or encroach upon each other's preserves, and then they urge on their fighting-men, as your countrymen, I am told, urge on bull-dogs, to tear and destroy one another ; and the daily strife of these slave partizans keeps the whole country in turmoil, and ultimately depopulates it,—for both parties plunder and make slaves of the natives. The fact is these Commandos are the captains of slaving and robbing hordes. They do incalculable mischief, and they make havoc

of the land. Through them good government is impossible, for they keep the country far and wide in a continual state of anarchy and bloodshed."

Of course it is only in such a land as that, and where slavery had thoroughly demoralised the people, white and black, that such a state of things could exist. Inordinate self-will, and all the worst vices which can infest humanity, almost invariably are manifested in men who dare to regard their fellow men as property, in the same sense that we do a horse or a cow. I can quite imagine however that at no time was slavery in our own colonies, or in the Southern States of America so utterly brutalising in its effects as in the Portuguese African colonies ; for of all the forms of slavery which have cursed mankind, that which is constituted by the Portuguese in Africa, their philanthropic declamations to the contrary, is the most brutal. And before I left Senhor A. I had a very fair illustration of the truth of this. One day I saw him superintending the punishment of a slave boy whom he kept to wait upon him, and who had been guilty of some act of disobedience. The punishment was severe ; it was a whipping inflicted by a strong man,—the Portuguese sergeant in fact,—with a three-thonged whip, each thong consisting of a plait of three strips of buck-hide. I remonstrated with the Senhor upon the brutality of this punishment. He took it in good part, but maintained, as a principle which cannot be set aside that, wherever slavery is, the discipline, even under the best of masters, must be more or less brutal, and the results demoralising both to master and slave : especially in countries where the masters form, as with the Portuguese in Africa, a very small minority. " You cannot," said he, " treat a slave in this land like a free man ; do so and he will rise against you or run away. You must keep them under by the whip, and any other means that suggest themselves, until they are reduced in mind and soul to the condition of dogs and live only for you. You see that man ? " pointing to one of his slaves, a stout-bodied, sturdy-looking fellow, who was at work near the house ; " well, that fellow gave me a great deal of trouble when he first became my property. He was brought down here fresh from the hills. He is an Achowa, and like all of his tribe, had some independence of character. The Achowas make good slaves when they are well broken in, but out of five you are fortunate if you get one moulded to your will, for the process kills them ; that is, they will die rather than submit to you as unreservedly as is needful. This fellow at first was sullen and disobedient,—thought of his home on the hills, his wife and children, may be. Well, that was nothing to me, he had become through the operations of a perfectly legitimate traffic my property ; for though the law prohibits the exportation of slaves, it permits slavery, and consequently the buying and selling of slaves amongst ourselves. So when he was disobedient I whipped him ; when he ran away, as he did more than once, I made every effort and spared no expense to recover him, as it will never do to let a slave escape—better kill him—the example of a successful runaway is so pernicious to the rest. At last he gave me so much trouble, and was the cause of so much excitement amongst my other slaves, that I ordered him to be beaten in a way that I

hoped would kill him, and his punishment was severe enough to kill any but a *brutos-negros*. You shall see. Come here you —— ! " called out the Senhor to the man in question. The fellow came, and his master turned down his loin-cloth, which in shame he had carefully tied over large scars in his loins, and I saw from them how horribly he must have suffered. " Well, that man would not die," continued the Senhor. " Life was strong in him, as it is indeed in all of the Africans. But the whip had at length cleaned the mucus from his brain. As he got well he became cheerful, went to work without a murmur, and having made up his mind to his position, determined to get to himself as much pleasure out of life as he could. So one day he came to me, and said, ' Master, give me a wife ; it is bad for a man to have no woman to light his fire, cook his food, and make him happy.' I had no spare women at that moment, and this I told him.

" ' Will you give me a woman when you have one ? ' asked he.

" ' Certainly ; I shall be sending ivory to Quillimane in a few days, and I will have women brought in return,' said I.

" ' That is good ! I will at once build a house for her,' was his joyful response.

" I received three women in exchange for my ivory ; and as I was examining my purchase, the Achowa came up and looked at them. Presently he said, ' Master, you promised me a wife ; will you give me one of these women ? '

" ' Certainly ; take which you please.'

" ' May I have this one ? ' taking hold of the hand of the youngest and best looking.

" I gave consent, and away he went with her, light of heart. Time passed ; the wife became ill from maternal causes. She was not then able to cook the Achowa's food, light his fire, and make him happy, and the man was evidently getting back into his old state of mind.

" ' What ails you ? ' said I. ' Do you want another whipping ? '

" ' No, master, no ; but the woman you gave me is ill ; she can do nothing for me. I am worse off than if I had no wife,' was his reply.

" ' Then why not take another wife ? '

" ' May I ? ' said he, with animation.

" ' Surely. There is So-and-So ; take her.'

" And he took her. But she was not the last, for having on a journey he undertook for me picked up another girl, he with my permission took her to wife also. And but lately, with my consent, of course, he has taken to a fourth. I passed by his hut the other day. One woman was in the house nursing her baby, another was preparing the evening meal, another was threading beads and making a necklace for him, and he was sitting at the feet of the fourth, who was dressing his hair. He looked up at me as I passed, as much as to say, ' It is all right, master. I am content. I shall not run away again.' It was necessary to give this man the whip first, but now the women will keep him quiet. Should they not—well, he must have the whip again, for he is a valuable fellow, and I don't mean

to part with him easily. Of course it is better to have children and educate them to your use, but we cannot always wait for that, and we cannot always afford to buy those who have been trained; we must purchase the raw material and work it up ourselves, and the process truly is not elevating to master or slave. I am not naturally a cruel man. I do not use the whip unless it be necessary; but the misfortune is, it is necessary: always necessary. I do not disguise that fact; others do; but take my word for it, I am no worse than any other of the masters in this land."

"But have the masters the power to punish their slaves as they think proper?" inquired I.

"By law, no; practically, yes: that is, in all the outlying settlements, for the law reaches not beyond the shadow of the governor's house. If I lived at Quillimane, or Mozambique, or at Tete, I should have to be discreet; for unless I was at friendship with the governor, he has the power to make me uncomfortable if I took the law into my own hands. But even there, unless you are at enmity with the authorities, you can get your slaves whipped according to your will, and without incurring the responsibility of your own deeds. The law says,—the master who has cause to complain of his slave must bring him before the magistrate, and prove that he is guilty of offence, and then the magistrate shall award the punishment, which shall be administered by the proper officers; but that law was made at Lisbon; it lost its efficacy before it reached these parts. Ask the magistrate to dinner, tell him you want a slave whipped, 'Very good; I will send my men to you to-morrow; tell them what you wish done, and they will do it,' would be his reply. And if that be the state of things at the centre of authority, what will it be in localities far removed from it? just what you see here, or worse, as you will judge for yourself."

Upon one other point I interrogated my informant, and that was upon the efforts made to Christianize the natives. This at one period was a strong point with the Portuguese. In Prince Henry's time, and long after his death, their zeal for religion was not less than their enthusiasm for geographical enterprise. No expedition left Portugal without a consignment of missionary priests. And so successfully did these good fathers labour, that in Western Africa whole tribes became professed Christians; and in the East, though the results of their self-sacrificing labours were not so considerable as in the West, they made many converts; I myself have seen, nearly five hundred miles in the interior, the ruins of a large missionary establishment, which had once been the centre of a considerable Christian population.

"Efforts to Christianize!" said he, "none are made. We have a law which has much significance. It says:—'It is not lawful to make any Christian a slave.' And the result is there are no Christians amongst the natives. In the palmy days of the slave trade it would have been bad policy to have allowed the missionaries free scope; they would have baptized the people *en masse*, and cut off our supplies; and as we could not restrain them we got rid of them. There has been no missionary work out here for more than two hundred years. The converts died out, having no one to look

after them : or their Christianity was not recognised, and they were enslaved with the rest. It was not convenient, you will perceive, to have native Christians. Our priests now-a-days, as missionaries, would as soon think of baptizing a pig as a native. Now and then, however, there is a sort of baptism, and on a large scale." And here the Senhor chuckled at the recollection of what he was about to tell me. "Some time since a friend of mine wished to migrate to another part of this country, which could only be reached by sea. He had some slaves that he was desirous of taking with him. The exportation of slaves under any circumstance is illegal. All natives who leave any of our ports are required to produce a certificate of baptism, which of course is conclusive in favour of their being free men, seeing by law no Christian can be a slave. Manifestly this is a difficulty, but such difficulties in this country are easily surmounted. And this is the way in which my friend got over his difficulty. He was staying with me, and I invited the priest to meet him at dinner. We plied the father with brandy until he was nearly drunk, and then apprised him of the obstacle. 'Is that all ?' said he, 'do not trouble, I will smooth the way for you.' And he smoothed it by going to the shed where the slaves were sleeping, throwing a lot of water over them indiscriminately, and then certifying that he had baptized them. Of course the slaves were none the wiser for what had been done, and the certificate when it had answered its purpose was destroyed. That," concluded the Senhor, "is the only mission work I ever knew performed by any of our priests, and I leave you to judge of its efficiency."

During a period of three years I had abundant opportunity of proving the veracity of the Senhor's statements, and where personal dislike had not led him astray, my experience showed them to be trustworthy. But he by no means exhausted the subject upon which I write. Of the operations of the slave trade as carried on by the Portuguese, Livingstone and others have written abundantly. Some, I know, have thought their accounts too highly coloured ; but it is not so. It is impossible to exaggerate the misery and suffering caused by this iniquitous traffic. Wherever it penetrates, villages are burnt, men, women, and children are killed or enslaved. I am not a sanguinary man ; I abhor bloodshed ; I have signed petitions for the abolition of capital punishment ; yet I would unhesitatingly sign the warrant that should doom to death by rifle or rope the men who, daring to call themselves Christians, pursue this abominable trade. This is not fustian, but the simple expression of a genuine indignation which I cannot but feel after having witnessed the horrible results of the slave trade as carried on by the Portuguese.

But though the slave trade may have received a fitting exposition, the domestic life of the Portuguese in Africa has not, that I am aware of, been delineated : and I shall best describe one phase of it by a brief detail of my own experience in the house of a Senhor B——, with whom I was of necessity for a short time cast ; for his mode of living was like unto that of most of his countrymen who had establishments either on the Delta or the banks of the Zambezi. Senhor B—— was about thirty-five years of

age, but looked much older, for vicious indulgences had played havoc with his constitution and prematurely aged him. In this he did not differ from many more, for either from congenital disease, or from the effects of their own depravity, most of the Portuguese in Africa are miserably, hideously afflicted. The Senhor had a farm on the banks of the Zambezi, and occasionally made expeditions for ivory and slaves. He was also "a man under authority," being entrusted by the Government with magisterial powers. He was not of pure blood, but the darker tint in his veins was scarcely visible. His establishment consisted of two houses—one for himself and family, the other for himself and guests; two or three store-sheds, sheds for slaves, and the usual arrangements for goats and sheep. His family consisted of the Senhorina, for the time being, a native woman, the daughter of one of the head men amongst the Colona of the neighbourhood, and several children, by various mothers, who called him father. (The Colona, be it said, are the descendants of the original owners of the soil. They are free men, but have submitted to the Portuguese. And for the privilege of occupying the ground on which they live they are so heavily taxed, and have to render so much personal service, and are in other ways so exposed to exaction and ill-usage, that their condition is scarcely better than that of the slaves.) There were about two hundred slaves on the establishment, most of whom were women and children. Of the women, some were employed about the house, others in the field; of the men, but a few were field labourers, some were canoe-men, and others had special vocations—were skilled in the use of the gun, were not averse to fighting, and were the unhesitating instruments and trusted agents of the Senhor in all his adventures.

The Senhorina was but a girl in years, and of all the African women I have seen the most attractive in personal appearance. On my arrival she received me without embarrassment, and was evidently unconscious that I saw in her position any reason for constraint. Of the Senhor she seemed to be in great awe, and his manner towards her was hard and imperious, it contained no recognition of the woman, as such, but only of the inferior creature who existed by his will, and for his gratification. And this I found was the almost invariable treatment which the Senhorinas received from their lords and masters. In return she was not gentle with the slaves, and I noticed that with them the Senhor was scrupulously careful to uphold her authority.

The furniture of the establishment was scarce in quantity and rude in design; but there were indications of wealth in piles of ivory tusks; and a certain barbaric comfort was given to the place by a somewhat profuse display of leopard skins.

Our food consisted of fowls excellently dressed in various ways, goat, sheep, rice, and vegetables. Bad tea, worse coffee, but very good wine and spirits, of which the Senhor had a considerable store. The Senhorina did not feed with the Senhor, she took her meals in her own apartment. Towards the evening she would put on her best apparel; she dressed as native women dress, only in costlier material and with more elaboration,

and sat with the Senhor and myself while we smoked in the summer-house. She was a heathen, and with no ideas beyond those of her own race ; yet she was simple in nature and faithful in disposition ; and if the Senhor did not tire of her, she would be content to abide with him. Should she be discarded, unless he made arrangements for her to go to some one of his friends, she would return to her own people, and become the wife of a man of her own tribe. Her children if she had any, would remain with the Senhor, and generally such children are well provided for by the father.

The moral tone of the whole establishment was as low as it could be. I was never in an atmosphere of greater depravity. From the Senhor to the youngest slave just emerging from babyhood you could distinguish nothing but foul minds, you heard scarcely anything but foul words and saw little else but foul deeds. It seemed as though these people were encircled with evil of the worst conceivable form, until its essence had moulded itself into their very natures, and they had become the embodiments of unmitigated uncontrolled wickedness.

But to every depth there is a deeper still, and of this I had an illustration before I left Senhor B. One morning a half-caste, evidently well-to-do in the world, brought a present of fruit and other things to the Senhor, by whom he was received in a manner that, had not the other been in some way in his power, must have given offence. When this man had gone, I said to the Senhor, " You did not treat your friend very civilly."

" Friend ! " was his exclamation ; " he is no friend of mine,—he is a murderer ! "

I was eating one of this man's oranges, and upon hearing this dropped it as though it had been hot iron.

" And yet you received his present ! why not arrest him ? " said I.

" This man is not the chief offender ; his brother actually committed the murder while this man did but consent to it, and looked on while it was done. The brother is in hiding, and these presents are made to cause me to shut my eyes to his whereabouts. But I bide my time."

" And pocketed the presents ! " I might have answered to this reply, for while the Senhor was talking he turned over the oranges, and from the bottom of the basket brought out a small calico bag from whence came a metallic sound as he put it into his jacket pocket. As he was not willing to give me the details of this crime, I resolved to become acquainted with them through other channels ; and it was not long before his major domo, a gossiping old African between whose brain and the tip of his tongue there seemed to be a perfect bond of sympathy, put me in possession of them. Said he,—" Listen, Senhor, and I will tell you all. The two brothers lived together on a farm not far from here, just round the bend of the river. The elder, not the man that was here yesterday, took a Senhora from the Colona who live near to him. She was young and strong and well ; but he is never well, always ill with a sickness that poisons his blood. The mother of the Senhora did not like him, she refused his presents for her daughter, and did not wish that she

should go to him ; but he took her ; and then the mother in her anger cursed him with many bad words. Soon after the Senhora becomes ill, and she remains ill until her child is born. The child is like its father, full of sickness, and dies in a few days. The mother of the Senhora tells all people that the sickness of her daughter and the death of the child is the fault of the father ; he swears that it is because of her curse ; and vows that if the next child be the same as the firstborn, he will be revenged. Time passes, Senhor, another child is born, in a worse condition than the other, so bad that the father when he saw it, threw it into the river. The mother of the Senhora is still very angry, she makes use of many bad words against the Senhor ; and he declares that she has bewitched him, and will kill her. He and his brother watch for her, they catch her, they tie her to a tree and beat her until she is nearly dead, then the Senhor, the brother of the man who came here, unties her, drags her to the river and throws her in. No more is seen of her, for the crocodiles are plentiful. All this is true, Senhor, very true."

" But how was this all discovered ? "

" Some Colona heard the woman's screams, saw her beaten and then thrown into the water, Senhor."

If this were an exceptional case of crime, and if Senhor B——'s establishment were of an exceptionally bad character, I should not have brought them forward ; but they fairly illustrate the condition of things as exhibited in the domestic life of most of the Portuguese who occupy isolated positions on the delta and the banks of the Zambezi.

I was personally much obliged for the hospitality of Senhor B——, yet I was thankful to leave him, for when I was again amongst the unsophisticated natives I felt I was within a purer moral atmosphere.

In the towns a somewhat better state of things prevails. The proprieties of life are not shamelessly outraged, and outwardly law and order are maintained. Before I left Africa I had the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with Tete, Quillimane, and Mozambique. I went to Tete with a friend who was striving as a geologist to enrich the realm of science. I was engaged in the interests of another kingdom. We had to walk nearly two hundred miles through a difficult country somewhat infested with wild beasts before we reached our destination. Tete is the head-quarters of the slave trade, and I took with me several men who had been rescued by myself and friends from the slave dealers as they were being taken to Tete ; and never have I had a greater proof of confidence than that given by those men, who with full knowledge of the character of the men of Tete, volunteered to accompany me. When we came in sight of the town we halted to make ourselves presentable to the inhabitants of so important a place, and to my surprise and amusement my native allies arrayed themselves in calico trowsers which they had made on the road. Now I know there is no essential connection between Christianity and trowsers, and nobody but a fool would think there was, but in that part of the world there is between trowsers and freedom. No slave is permitted to wear trowsers by the Portuguese, and when my men entered

Tete with us they proclaimed themselves free men by their nether garments. My friend had been to Tete before, and upon a trying emergency had received much kindness from a merchant there; for frequently you find in these Portuguese great generosity existing with an utter absence of principle; and to this man's house our steps were directed. We were made welcome, and not having room for us in his own home, he assigned to our use an empty house of which he was the owner.

Tete is situated on the south bank of the Zambezi, and is backed by Mount Caroera, a hill of sandstone, destitute of all vegetation, and about 3,000 feet high. The houses are large, well built, and of stone. The fortifications are contemptible. The soil in the town and about the town is brown and barren of verdure; but cattle were feeding upon the stunted herbage by the river side. The Tete merchants generally come from Goa, or are the descendants of Goa men. As a rule they have but little capital, and they make desperate ventures to realize a fortune. Sometimes they succeed, more frequently they fail. One man was pointed out to me who had become an infidel because Providence had not favoured his attempts to get rich. For a time all went well with him. Ivory was gained and found a profitable market, slaves were obtained for little and disposed of for much. Then he gathered his strength for a crowning effort, and visions of ease and plenty in Europe delighted him. He ventured all he had in the world, and more, for he borrowed money from his friends. He took with him an army of retainers, and plunged into the interior. For a time all went well with him, but success made him imprudent; he plundered where he might have bought, he seized with violence men, women and children, where he might have had them in barter; and when he was returning laden with spoil, he found his way barred by the hostility of the natives he had made his enemies. In the conflicts which ensued he lost all his booty, his slaves and retainers were killed or dispersed, and he hardly escaped with his own life. He returned to Tete a ruined man, sick and wounded, and in disgust with Providence renounced Christianity, and with other fools said in his heart, "There is no God."

Tete is a garrison town, and the soldiers were of three classes—natives, Europeans who are convicts, and Europeans of good character. The officers were Europeans, and, for the most part, gentlemen.

There were but two or three European women at Tete,—the wife of the governor, and the wives of one or two of the soldiers. The half-caste women were more numerous, and bore a bad reputation.

The governor of Tete was not popular; he was a reformer, and too much of a gentleman for the majority of the inhabitants. He enforced law, and made nefarious practices difficult, and he was hated accordingly. Hatred begets the desire for revenge, and in revenge for being compelled to act justly, one merchant swore he would seduce the governor's daughter, and nearly succeeded in doing so. Altogether, his position was a very unenviable one, for a more reprobate set of desperados than the generality of the Tete people it would be difficult to find.

The last incident in my life at Tete it is difficult to forget. We were to commence the return journey on the morrow. I gave my men a goat in order that they might feast with the friends they had made. They feasted in the yard at the back of the house we occupied. I had dined with the governor that night, and on returning to our house found my men in a state of indignation. The cause was this:—They had invited a boy who fetched them water to partake of their good cheer. He was the slave of a peddling huckster in the place, who, hearing of what his slave was doing, came to the house and caught him in the act of eating a piece of meat. He seized him by the throat, and nearly strangled him; he beat him about the head and face until he was not recognisable; he threw him down and jumped upon him; and wherefore? Because he had dared to eat animal food. Said he when he went away, after throwing the child apparently lifeless into a corner of the yard, “I told him not to eat meat. He shall not eat meat. Meat makes the creatures proud.”

The child revived, and so far recovered during the night as to be able to be removed. And some of my men took him across the river, placed him in hiding, picked him up next day, and brought him on with us; but, being too injured to walk at once, they made a rough kind of palanquin, in which they helped him forward.

The time came for me to leave Africa, and I was again at the mouth of the Zambezi, where a ship was expected to take off any Englishmen who were ready for departure. For weeks I watched for this ship, less anxious for myself than for a friend with me, who was all but dead with fever. The ship came, and my friend's delight when from my shoulders he saw it approach was excessive; but not seeing our signal she sent in no boat, and then his heart was nearly broken as he beheld her sail away again. To give him a chance of life I resolved to take him up the Zambezi again as far as Mazaro, a distance of a hundred miles, and from thence, by way of the Naquaqu river, proceed to Quillimane, where I hoped to find some vessel which would convey us to some port more within hail of English ships than the Zambezi. We had been the guests of Senhor A——. He helped us in every way he could and, finding that I had no money, forced upon me 30*l.* out of 50*l.*, of pay he had just received. I was able to return it before I left Quillimane, and with it letters of introduction to friends, in case he should ever try to leave his wretched life in Africa, and wanted the opportunity to make a fresh and a better start in England. Poor fellow! my hopes for him were not realised, for soon after I left he was removed to Mozambique, where he died.

The general appearance of Quillimane is far from displeasing. The houses are backed or surrounded by gardens, in which are orange and other trees; and groves of cocoa-nut palms judiciously planted give to the whole place that peculiar charm which that tree alone imparts. Yet upon all there seems the spirit of ruin and decay. Everywhere you see symptoms of that deterioration of character, that indifference to honest, manly pursuits, which is invariably associated with slavery. Of the past of this place, it were scarcely possible to speak; it has had terrible ante-

cedents. Outwardly, however, the present life of Quillimane seems less obnoxious than I had been led to expect: There are several respectable families in the town, and they are sufficiently influential to give tone to the rest. I became acquainted with the priests; they were men of very inferior capacity, and from what I saw of them I had no difficulty in believing with Senhor A——, that virtuous precept from their mouths would be sheer mockery.

A small ship which traded between Quillimane and Mozambique was almost ready for sailing when we arrived. We took passages in her, as at Mozambique it was almost certain that we should soon fall in with one of the British cruisers. We slept on board the night before she sailed, and early in the morning four soldiers, accompanied by a civilian who used an umbrella to shield his person from the rays of the rising sun, brought down a slave to the whipping-post, which was not far from our moorings. After binding him to the post the soldiers, two on and two off, as they tired, beat him with rods made of hippopotamus hide, a single blow from which seems almost sufficient to ruin an ordinary muscle. I counted more than five hundred stripes, and then: "He is dead," was the careless comment of one of the passengers standing beside me. He may have been, I do not know: I daresay he was, for this passenger was doubtless a good judge of such matters; but I do know that as I looked on I thought,—what a good thing it would be to send the master (the man with the umbrella) as well as the slave to meet at one and the same moment the consequences of their acts in the regions of eternity. And I felt angry, God forgive me! that I could not take this act of vengeance upon myself.

I came to Mozambique with every disposition to think favourably of it. For twenty days we had knocked about the Mozambique channel in a dirty little ship filled with dirty men, whose minds and habits were as foul as their persons. I had been compelled to endure bad food and worse accommodation; for having to choose between a pestiferous berth below, in company with men who excited nausea to look at them, and a corner of the deck where I might sleep like a dog in a kennel: I chose the latter. I longed for land, and with it release from my vile imprisonment; and when we sighted Mozambique I rejoiced greatly. Mozambique certainly is the most important monument of the by-gone glory of the Portuguese in Eastern Africa, and as you approach it from the sea it still seems invested with an atmosphere of grandeur. But "'tis distance lends enchantment to the view," for the Portuguese neglect drainage, and it is impossible to regard as beautiful any place or thing from whence proceeds the most abominable odours. There is at Mozambique a semblance of power and an affectation of commercial energy. But considering the advantages of its position, the many years it has been in the possession of the Portuguese, and the monopoly of trade which they have jealously held, the result is most contemptible. The export of slaves being illegal, one source of profit is lost to the people of Mozambique, yet instead of exerting themselves to develop the revenues of the mainland, one of the richest and, might be, most productive districts of this part of Africa, and to the furtherance of a legitimate trade, they

scheme to evade the law, to keep up an illicit commerce in human beings, and will risk life and fortune in this not frequently profitable traffic ; for it is rarely that a cargo of slaves from Portuguese territory escapes the vigilance of our cruisers. When I was at Mozambique four large Spanish ships were off the coast, nominally for rice, in reality for slaves, which were ready for shipment at various stations ; but so closely were they watched by our ships that they not only failed to secure their cargoes, but two of them were seized on suspicion of being slavers, and were condemned as such. I do not venture to tax the Portuguese officials with connivance in these cases, yet I have heard it said repeatedly by men who were avowedly interested in such ventures, that without their connivance the trade would be absolutely impossible ; and without the bribes which they receive on such occasions it would be impossible for them to acquire the wealth with which they are frequently known to retire from office.

We had not been at Mozambique long before a man-of-war came into port, the captain of which received us on board ; and never felt I more proud of my nationality than when first I stood on the deck of that ship.

As Mozambique faded from my view I thought what a gain it would be to the cause of humanity if the Portuguese in Africa could be suddenly blotted from existence ; even though no other civilized power occupied their places for centuries to come. That they can for long maintain their present position seems very improbable. Since I was there they have lost much territory and prestige. Bonga, a native chief, and the son of a man who once sacked Tete but was himself afterwards defeated, has improved upon his father's proceedings, and has utterly destroyed Tete and all other Portuguese establishments thereabouts. In vain have troops in great numbers been sent from Europe to recover the position, all attempts to do so have failed, the Portuguese have been again and again ignominiously beaten. They now hold nothing but their places on the coast ; but from Quillimane they may be driven any day by the Landeens ; and so contemptible are their defences elsewhere that the crew of a single British man-of-war would be amply sufficient to dislodge them from every other position.

I saw in the papers lately an announcement that the Portuguese were making a road to the diamond diggings from Inhambane, in the hope of drawing trade to that place. The country about Inhambane has great capacity, cotton might be grown there to any extent, and many other things also that are in general demand and fetch high prices ; but I trust no Englishmen will be deluded by the above announcement to make trial of this Portuguese road, for if they do they will surely repent it. The Portuguese in Africa are not given to road making, or to any other occupation that requires hard work, manly energy, and patient endurance. I have not misrepresented them : as I found them so I have described them ; and my description will, I fear, hold good of them wherever in Africa they may be found.

Le Ministre Malgré lui:

A CONTEMPORARY STORY.

I.

WHEN young Telemachus was undergoing his competitive examination for the kingship of Crete, one of the questions set him was to define a happy man, and the wise Mentor who stood behind to prompt him, conformably to a practice since abolished in competitive examinations, bade him answer that the really happy man was he who considered himself so. Admitting this definition to be correct, then M. le Comte Fortuné de Ris, deputy of the National Assembly, who rented a first-floor flat in a house of the Boulevard Malesherbes, Paris, where no cats or parrots were kept, was the happiest man out. He had everything to make him happy, and sense enough to know it :—a handsome face, good figure, fine health, an income larger than people suspected,—thongh he passed for rich—and no profession, save that of enjoying himself, which is a pleasant profession when one succeeds in it. In age M. de Ris was two-and-forty, but looked younger ; in complexion florid and jovial ; in stature the same height as other Frenchmen. In a general way he was blithe-tempered, witty, and so thoroughly agreeable with women that he numbered more of them on the list of his intimate friends than would have sufficed for the vanity of ten less-favoured beings, even supposing these ten to have been covetous.

But M. de Ris was not happy because Nature had ordained it so beforehand, just as she settles for us whether we shall have brown hair or red. He was happy because for the conduct of his life he had laid down certain simple rules which experience had taught him gave happiness to others, and which he never transgressed. In the first place, he never spoke ill of people, but suffered them to think that he admired them sincerely all round : an illusion which did them no harm nor him either. In the next place, he always kept his word,—a surer recipe for contentment than many persons appear to imagine, though it must be stated that he avoided such rash promises as swearing to love one woman eternally, or vowing that he would never shake hands with such-and-such a friend again if he did this or that that was contrary to the public mood. M. de Ris's third rule was to render as many services as he could, and always to do so in such an enthusiastic way as to make the person obliged esteem that it was he, the recipient, who conferred the favour by accepting it, and that the donor was touched to the heart, overjoyed and proud beyond measure at so much condescension. This, after mature reflection, was the only mode M. de Ris had been able to devise for preventing that each benefit conferred should become a cause of undying enmity. By leading persons to believe that in accepting his money and not returning it they were placing him under a lasting obligation, he had put matters upon a footing

satisfactory and honourable to both parties. The Count's fourth and most important rule absolute, was to eschew politics.

Now this for a deputy of the Assembly was rather a knotty problem ; but M. de Ris was not a deputy through any fault of his own. He had been returned in the winter of 1871, after the capitulation of Paris, when an assembly had been hastily convoked to meet at Bordeaux, and constituencies were selecting the most popular men they could find, without much reference to their tastes or their fitness. M. de Ris was nominated by the electoral committee of the department in which he owned a country seat, and had been returned out of hand. He was much chagrined by this result, which was communicated to him before he had yet left Paris, where, during the siege, he had fought with distinction as a commandant of Gardes Mobiles. His first impulse was to send in his resignation, and it is even said that his letter on this subject was ready signed and sealed ; but somebody pointed out to him so eloquently that in times of trouble a man owes willing service to his country ; and somebody else produced such telling arguments to show that a deputy need not know more about politics than any ordinary man, that M. de Ris gave in. He took his seat at Bordeaux in the very centre of the Assembly—so centrally, indeed, that if you had drawn a string from President Grévy's chair right across the Chamber, you would have found Count de Ris at the end of it. This meant that he was a “neutral ;” that between Henry V., the Count of Paris, Napoleon III., and the Republic, he had no choice whatever ; and that on every occasion where his vote was called for he intended recording it in such a way as not to compromise him. This was rather like tight-rope dancing, but M. de Ris's logic on the subject was unanswerable. “If I make a selection,” said he, “before I know which of the four is going to win, I shall be obliged to adhere to it during the rest of my life under pain of being thought a renegade, which is absurd. The Count of Chambord is a prince of great honour, whom I venerate ; the Count of Paris could hold his own in point of intelligence with any sovereign or president in Christendom ; Napoleon III. was always extremely gracious to me, and decorated me with his own hand without my having ever asked for such a favour ; the Empress also is charming ; as for the Republic, to declare myself an anti-republican is to say that I don't believe we French are capable of governing ourselves, which is an opinion only good for foreigners.” The party-whips endeavoured to shake this neutralism by adroit flatteries, and the party-wits to undermine it by banter ; but M. de Ris was impervious to flattery, and, when tackled by a wit, he put his case in a nutshell by saying : “I know four ladies of equal beauty : the Marquise de Rosecroix, who is a legitimist ; the Countess de Potofeu, who holds for Louis-Philippe II. ; the Baroness de Diamantelle, who is enamoured of the Napoleons ; and Mdme. Garrulet, the deputy's wife, who is a Republican. If I were to enlist on the side of one of these ladies, the doors of the other three would be closed to me, and that I do not want.” Whereat the wit would laugh, and let M. de Ris alone. In France they always let a man alone who knows how to defend himself.

It should be mentioned in passing, that M. de Ris's independence was

not quite the effect of political poltroonery, though a foreigner might have opined that there was a strong spice of this foible flavouring it. His was rather the eclecticism and sceptic epicureanism of politics. He thought there was something good to be said for every party, and said it. He also thought that to pin one's faith to a set of doctrines which may be as unwearable in a year as last twelvemonth's fashions,—to cast in one's lot with a particular dynasty or system which may be less long of life than a deciduous leaf, is the act neither of a clever man nor of a wise one. There was a friend of his, who, towards the close of Louis Philippe's reign, had taken an undue interest in the Pritchard indemnity case. Every time the name of Pritchard was mentioned this hot-headed patriot foamed at the mouth, rolled flaming eyeballs, and launched such fulminating declamations against the policy of M. Guizot, that he ended by exasperating a supporter of that statesman, who called him out, and wounded him so badly that his right leg had to be amputated. Alas! who remembers the Pritchard case now? The hot-headed and crippled patriot stumped through life bitterly anathematizing the day when he was induced to part with his leg for a cause about which nobody cared a pin six months after it had been settled; and which went clean out of the public mind long before the victim of it had learned to do without crutches. This example had always struck M. de Ris most powerfully. He often thought of what it would be if he himself were to lose his leg in over zealous debate, and though he was not a fearer of duels, having fought several without much detriment to himself or his adversaries, he caused the name "Pritchard" to be neatly set in red enamel on a locket which he usually wore at his watch-chain; and every time he felt tempted to take an excited part in politics, he consulted this locket, learning thereby the great and prudent lesson that half the questions which set men by the ears are not worth the breath that is wasted on them. There was another excellent and cogent reason for M. de Ris's abstention, which was this;—Rich, young, and clever as he was (for he was clever, and had been told it so often that he really had some excuse for being modestly conscious of it), he could not, had he joined a political party, have remained one of the ruck. He must have come to the front, and, had his party triumphed, he must have risen to power, which of all things in the world was what he most dreaded. As a private nobleman he could pick his society as he pleased, flit about from palace to green-room; be on intimate terms with princes and artists, opera-singers or bishops; lift his hat on a race-course within the same five minutes to a duchess and a ballet-girl; and, in a word, wherever he went cotton with the pleasantest people, without feeling under any obligation to shake the hand of wheezy retired grocers because they were champions of the ministry, or listen to the emetic-like blandishments of semi-official journalists. Once a Minister or an ex-Minister, however, all this would be changed. Even if he had held office but a day he must go on stilts to the hour of his death, be on the alert about his dignity, and hold unimpeachably orthodox views as to the blending of liberty and order under a well established government. This was why he so sedulously held aloof from everything that resembled an opinion. This

was why he always kept a quiverful of repartees ready for those who sought to ensnare him ; and this is why the head and front of his ambition amounted only to this—to continue leading to his dying day the untroubled and amusing life he had lived ever since he was his own master.

However, it is not in the vastness of our wishes, but in the intensity of them, even when moderate, that lies the danger of disappointment : and we introduce M. de Ris on a morning of last autumn when there happened to him one of those grievous things which prove how utterly vain are all human calculations.

It was about nine o'clock. Wrapped in a velvet dressing-gown, the Count was seated in his toilet-room, opposite a bright fire of beech logs, and looking out of the window to watch cozily the rime of October frost being melted off the trees by the early sun. This was not in Paris, but at the Count's country seat, distant about two hours by rail from town, —an agreeable place, made up of mediæval picturesqueness and modern comfort, and situated in a district where revolutions and issues of tenpenny bank-notes had no effect upon the inhabitants. The Count was staying there for a couple of days rest between two visits to the shooting-boxes of indefatigable Nimrod friends, and, having arrived late the evening before, he had luxuriated in bed this morning rather longer than was his wont when within gunshot of well-stocked coverts. M. Narcisse, his confidential valet, entered with a tray bearing his master's chocolate, newspapers, and letters, and laid these things on a hand-table near the arm-chair. Then, this done, he said with that lively and irrepressible tendency to converse which one had better not discourage in a French servant under pain of rendering him sulky :—“ What a morning M. le Comte ! I suppose M. le Comte intends going over the estate ? ”

“ I suppose I must, Narcisse,” smiled his master, showing not much disposition to move, but rather drawing nearer to the fire ; and he took another glance at the window. “ These rounds of inspection to poultry-yards and pig-troughs are rounds of tribulation, Narcisse. You must lay me out my thickest boots, the yellow gaiters, and the velveteen coat. I am not likely to meet anybody.”

“ Your neighbour Mdme. de Claire arrived at the Château de Beaupré last night, M. le Comte,” answered Narcisse, quite discreetly.

It was the forte of M. Narcisse, was discretion ; for all which he was a brisk valet with eyebrows like two circumflex accents, which gave him a perpetual air of astonishment, also a trick of doing everything in a headlong way, as if he were haunted by the constant vision of express trains about to start without him.

“ Eh ? Mdme. de Claire is at the Castle ? ” ejaculated M. de Ris, rousing himself completely at the name which his servant had pronounced, and casting a third and much more wide-awake glance at the window. “ Ah ! I see the sun is shining, Narcisse, so, instead of the velveteen, perhaps I may as well air that new shooting-suit I have not yet worn ; and —stay—as to the boots, I won't have the thickest—not the thickest of all I mean—those with the nails—a medium pair will do.”

M. Narcisse was just then bustling about the room at the rate of ten miles the hour, and setting out razors, strop and shaving-brush on the dressing-table, as if an imaginary guard had just rung the train-bell for an instantaneous departure. He finished his precipitate work to his satisfaction, and then vanished to fetch the suit that had never been worn and the boots that were not the thickest. M. de Ris, the while, left alone, and still thinking apparently of Mdme. de Claire, gazed pensively for a short space into the fire. His reverie—which seemed to be a not unpleasant one—may have lasted a couple of minutes; then he turned to his chocolate and his letters, slowly stirring the one in its cup and examining the envelopes of the others before opening them.

The Count's gallant proclivities brought so many feminine missives into his hands that there was nothing novel in the fact that four out of the seven letters on his tray should be in ladies' writing. There were two mauve envelopes, a primrose, and a pale blue one, all addressed in that cramped and pointed calligraphy which speaks of the hard sharpness of French steel nibs, these instruments seeming indeed specially designed by Providence to check the torrents of correspondence which would flow from a Frenchwoman's mind if only the native pens would glide more smoothly over the paper. M. de Ris read his letters attentively, and it looked as if they entertained him, for he was nearly three-quarters-of-an-hour over them. At the conclusion he took out of a Dresden bowl, shaped like a dog's head, enough Turkish tobacco to roll himself a cigarette, and prepared for the other epistles, one of which he recognised as coming from a friend who wrote with energy about Croatian questions, another as a tradesman's circular, and the third, of which he now observed for the first time was not stamped but franked.

There must have been something very foreboding about the look of this last envelope, for at sight of it the Count stopped half-way in his cigarette work and began with sudden but rapidly growing apprehension to turn the letter over between his fingers. How had he come not to notice before that the envelope was one of those whitey-brown ones in which Government correspondence is sent? that the post-mark was "Versailles?" and that the seal bore the private crest of an extremely Great Personage under the Republic? He changed colour slightly. What could it be? The Assembly was not sitting then, so it could not enclose a letter of convocation. The extremely Great Personage was not likely to be issuing cards for a dinner-party at that time of the year, so it could not be that. He mused and mused; and the clouds gathered over his brow as over a sunny sky in April. Then he poured himself out a glass of water and drank it; and, as strong men in moments of emotion like to be standing, he stood up and leaned against the mantel-shelf whilst he broke the seal.

This is what the whitey-brown envelope contained:—

MY DEAR COUNT DE RIS,—

Versailles, October —, 1871.

As you have heard, the Ministership for the Cochin China colonies has just become vacant, and I write without delay to offer you the post. It has given me very great satisfaction to observe how, amid the interested strife of parties, you have

acknowledged no flag but patriotism, and have constantly seconded the Government by your firm and enlightened votes ; it has also been a no small source of pleasure to me to perceive that your excellent example has been followed by other members of the Assembly who have grouped themselves round you and now look up to you as their leader. In this time of national mourning, when the efforts of all good citizens should be directed towards the regeneration of their country, the qualities which recommend a Minister are essentially those which you possess : impartiality, amiability, and zeal for the public good—also antecedents free from ties to any political factions or individual. I am well aware that in asking you to undertake duties fraught with great responsibility and entailing a large sacrifice of daily time and anxiety I am making a heavy demand without having any adequate return to offer save the opportunity of widening your sphere of public usefulness. But I do not hesitate because the more arduous the labour and the less the reward so much the greater I know will be your tendency to accept. Trusting, therefore, that I may have the gratification of hearing an affirmative reply from your own lips at Versailles, to-morrow, I beg you to believe, my dear Count de Ris, in the assurance of my high regard,

And here followed the signature.

Now this was pleasant. As crowning result of twenty years' careful strategy, it was worth commending to those who believe in the science of life. The Count stood for a moment like a man who has turned up the two of spades when he wanted the ace of diamonds, and the unlucky letter weighed down his hand to his side as if it had been written on sheet lead. He looked so stunned that on M. Narcisse reappearing with the suit that had never been worn and the medium boots, that domestic gave a start, and exclaimed : "Dear me ! Is there anything the matter ? Is M. le Comte ill ? "

To which the Count, shaking off his torpor, replied with an abrupt vehemence which made M. Narcisse's eyebrows stand up more circumflexly than ever :—" Matter ! Yes, everything is the matter. Do you know what a Minister is ? "

M. Narcisse stood dangling the boots in his right hand and pressing the clothes to his heart with his left arm. He appeared to turn the matter over in his mind and then answered :—" A Minister, M. le Comte, lives in a mansion with sentries at the door ; the newspapers cut jokes at him ; he has a salary of a hundred thousand francs a year, and when a revolution comes he is obliged to escape in disguise."

" Yes, that's it, escape in disguise," answered the Count grimly, as this new feature in a Minister's privileges recurred to him. " Joked at by the papers and escape in disguise—there you have it in ten words. Well, Narcisse, they want to make a Minister of ME ! "

M. Narcisse dropped both the boots, and in trying to recover them let go the clothes. When he had picked them up he looked very red, and with wonder-lit eyes said :—" They want to make a Minister of M. le Comte ? Well— (here his voice broke into an excited gallop) ; well, I hope Monsieur will not neglect this opportunity of seeing that my brother Hyacinthe gets that post of Garde Champetre which he has long been asking. Then there is my other brother Jasmin who was promised the military medal, and, as I often say, for a government to promise and

not to keep is to make men revolutionary, though for the matter of that I have no sympathy with the Commune nor with M. Gambetta, whom I think is just as bad, for as I often say, when a man stirs up the elements of popular discord which ought never to be allowed under a strong government, and places himself at their head, he is responsible for all the breakages. And I don't think either that the wife of my cousin Jacques was well served by the Imdemnity Commission, for it is certain that the largest of her two pigs, weighing a hundred and eighty-seven pounds, and a perfect picture, was eaten by the Prussians, who never paid, being thieves, and as I often say for a Government to stand such things"

"Go to the devil," burst in Count de Ris. "At least go and order the phaeton round in half-an-hour, and fetch me some visiting clothes."

II.

Less than fifty minutes after the perusal of his letter, the Count was driving up the avenue that led to the Château de Beaupré, the residence of his neighbour Mdme. de Claire. He had taken the most irrevocable resolution not to accept the post offered him, and during the ten minutes' ride between his own house and Beaupré Park he had pondered over a dozen different forms of declinatory replies to the Great Personage's dispatch. What did they mean by offering him a post for which he was unfitted by taste, nature, and social training? He whipped his horses with such vigour that John, his English groom, who sat behind him, and was unused to this way of dealing with high-mettled cattle, wondered what had come over the "guv'nor." Certainly there was no other answer possible to such a proposal but a courteous and decided—yes, that was it, courteous and decided—no. Nevertheless the Count wanted somebody to tell him he was quite right in his resolve, to pat him morally on the back as it were and assure him that nothing could be more reasonable and proper than his conduct; and this is why he called upon Mdme. de Claire, of whose good sense he had the best opinion.

The Baroness de Claire was the widow of a nobleman considerably older than herself, who had died, leaving her a large fortune. She was twenty-eight, and a woman of great beauty and tact, who exercised a queen's sway over the whole department, and whom M. de Ris classed quite apart when dividing his feminine acquaintances into categories. If Mdme. de Claire had been less graceful, less sweet-tempered, less eminently womanlike, she might have passed for a strong-minded woman, for her thoughts were not cast in those common-place moulds which fabricate thoughts by the hundred thousand on a uniform pattern for common-place people. But as something of the notion of ill-cut gowns, and down on the upper lip attaches to the term "strong-minded" in reference to ladies, Mdme. de Claire did not deserve the epithet. She was all that a woman should be; and if men could have coined a new word to express the blending of all that is amiable and good, with what is sensible and clever, they would have inaugurated it in her honour.

She was in a morning room when the Count was introduced, and exquisitely dressed in a *peignoir* of buff cashmere with wide trimming of white lace round the edges, and loose sleeves, and a lace scarf round the waist. In the rich clusters of her black hair she had set a scarlet-rose, and a small cross of black pearls that hung to a velvet ribbon served to show off the snowy outline of her throat. She was arranging flowers in a Japanese vase ; and beside her, with her tiny dimpled chin resting on the table's edge stood Mdlle. Lucie her daughter, a little mite of a thing four years old, who held her apron full of the dew-wet flowers, and handed them up one by one to her mother as they were wanted. There was an air of home and gaiety about the tastefully furnished room which offered many a pretty knicknack for the sun to try its golden arrows on ; and through the muslin curtains which were closed to prevent the ingress of autumn wasps, who might have waged war on Miss Lucie, came a fresh healthy scent of morning, with twittering of blithesome sparrows.

The servant announced : " Monsieur le Comte de Ris," and Mdme. de Claire held out her hand with one of her bright smiles.

" You are most welcome, my dear Count. I only returned yesterday, and Lucie and I were just wondering together whether our good fortune would send us any visitors."

" You see before you the most perplexed of men," answered the Count, raising her hand to his lips—for one is sorry to state that Anglomania has not yet generalized in France that charming mode of salutation which consists in squeezing a lady's hand and working it up and down like a pump-handle,—" the most perplexed of men, who comes to beg alms of you in the shape of advice," added he, proceeding to salute Mdlle. Lucie, whom he lifted up and kissed.

" I dot a noo doll, une grande poupee avec bloo eyes, tu sais, monsieur," observed Miss Lucie, who, having a Scotch nurse and an English governess, spoke at times a very odd jumble of languages.

" Then Lucie had better leave us," said Mdme. de Claire with an apologetic glance towards the little thing, who was the miniature portrait of herself. " You will find her terribly noisy if she remains. Put down the rest of the flowers, Lucie, and make your best curtsey to M. de Ris."

" Oh, Lucie and I are old friends," replied M. de Ris ; " she shall sit on my knee ;" and Mdlle. Lucie, who foresaw that her withdrawal might lead to an hour's spelling lesson in the company of Miss Thompson, the governess, protested : " Je ne talkerai pas, maman, j'écouterai tout ce que le monsieur says."

On that understanding Mdlle. Lucie was allowed to sit on the visitor's knee and play with his watch-chain, where the name " Pritchard," embossed on the locket, soon engaged her undivided attention. Mdme. de Claire took her place on the sofa opposite a tambour frame, on which shone, half completed, one of those smart chasubles which French ladies fill their leisure by embroidering for the country clergy. M. de Ris then drew out the letter of the Great Personage, and handed it to the Baroness, beginning at the same time to unfold his most painful story.

"Then it is true?" said Mdme. de Claire, returning him the letter with a smile after reading its contents; and making a slight inclination of the head, which might be construed into a congratulation. "I saw it announced in the papers, but it was only mentioned as a rumour."

"It is in the papers already!" exclaimed the Count in real consternation. "Then the matter is worse than I expected. They have done that in order to make it more difficult for me to refuse. But I shall not be caught for all that. *I will refuse.*"

"You will refuse?" echoed the Baroness, quite quietly, and working at her chasuble.

"Why? Is not such your advice?" inquired the Count, a little astonished, and he unhooked his watch-chain to facilitate Mdlle. Lucie's inspection.

"That must depend on the reasons you have to give," said she, raising her large, clear eyes, and fixing them on him interrogatively.

"P-R-I-T—Prit," broke in Mdlle. Lucie, in a speculative whisper, "c-h-a-r-d—chat—Prit-chat"—(here a pause). "Dat is zoor cat's name: le chat Prit?" and she softly nudged the Count's elbow. "Dis moi de quelle couleur il est, black or tabby ton chat Prit?"

The name of the missionary who was nearly being the cause of a war between France and England lisped out from between Mdlle. Lucie's small lips acted like a clarion upon the distressed Count, waking him to sudden eloquence. Mdme. de Claire wanted his reasons: he gave them her. Quickly, and with that fervour which fires us all when we speak of our own hardships, he sketched the unruffled life he had led hitherto, and grew pathetic about the proposal that tended to transform him in four-and-twenty hours from the happiest man in all Paris into the most wretched Cabinet Minister of all Europe. It was like a shell falling upon a pleasure villa; a blight settling upon a tree; a drug mingling with wine—anything that was unexpected, needless, and unkind. Why had they not appealed to one of those men who are constantly running after appointments, like a certain edible quadruped after truffles? There were plenty of them encumbering the Versailles lobbies—men who did not care for the jibes of the press nor blink koo-toeing to grocer-politicians, and whose consciences were not sensitive to a peccadillo more or less when it suited the public good, or their own. A Minister should be a man with vigorous lungs, forward of speech, and impressed with the belief that Heaven had put him where he was to sit upon the public like a hair shirt, without paying heed to remonstrances. No man was fit to be a Minister who could not shed opportune tears over his own civic virtues, his integrity, his disinterestedness; and yet fight with desperate energy whenever an attempt was made to unseat him. Nobody had ever seen a Minister take his place in a Cabinet with the private wish to be relieved from his emoluments as soon as possible. This would be a breach of faith towards one's colleagues, a precedent likely to create confusion and bring the ministerial office into ridicule. Thus argued M. le Comte de Ris for the better part of a quarter-of-an-hour, whilst Mdme. de Claire, continuing to embroider, listened patiently and

attentively. Mdlle. Lucie, less patient and attentive, slipped at an early stage of the argument off the Count's knees and went to fetch off the hearth-rug her Angora kitten, Minette, with a view to establishing points of comparison by-and-by between this much-favoured cat and the Count's own *chat, Prit.*

"And now," said the Count, by manner of conclusion, "I do hope you approve of all I have said; for I mean to be guided entirely by your advice as to the way in which I ought to decline this unreasonable offer."

The Baroness paused in her work and looked up.

"Well, there are two kinds of advices, my dear Count; the first of which I may call 'constitutional,' for it consists in coming with a set of resolutions already framed in one's own mind, and asking somebody simply to ratify them. If it be constitutional advice you want, then I say that your pleas are very humorous, and that you cannot do better than follow your own inclination. Only I think I would go in person to Versailles and state my reasons for refusing. It is more polite than writing. The other advice is the candid . . ." and with a slight smile Mdme. de Claire bent over her chasuble again.

"Please give me candid advice," answered the Count, after a moment's hesitation, and looking both resigned and miserable; "I could bear anything from you, even blame."

"My candid advice, then, is, that you should accept the offer," said Mdme. de Claire gently. "You say that you are dismayed at the unsettled condition of affairs? this is reason the more for lending your aid to calm us. You urge that you have not the qualities necessary for the post, that I think is excess of modesty."

The Count looked crushed.

"You cannot surely think it is my duty to set myself up as a butt for all the journalists and coffee-house orators of this scribbling chattering nation?" said he.

"Duty is a big word, and a man can only judge for himself where his duty lies. But if every man of education and influence refused to serve his country, what would become of us?"

"I risked my life without hesitation," broke in the Count, expostulating. "And I would give up every franc of my fortune to-morrow, if it could do France any good."

"Life and money are the two things to which men of your rank hold least," answered Mdme. de Claire; "but supposing you were to sacrifice that for which you really do care—a little of your time, your habits, some of your comforts?"

She glanced up at him gaily, almost coaxingly, and her manner of speaking was so sensible and feeling, that he knew not what to say. In his inmost heart the conviction arose that having asked her advice so far, he was now bound to follow it; and this added to his embarrassment; but as she proceeded to review, in her musical voice, all the objections he had raised, and found a pithy, well-put answer to each; another sentiment overshadowed the first, and he began dimly to discern a career of useful

labour and fame opening to him, where at first he had seen only gloom and annoyance. After all, he was a man of birth, whose ancestors had at different times and in divers ways done service to the state ; and he was the only one of his line who had set his heart's ambition on doing nothing. What was this but selfishness ? He might veil his conduct under what paradoxes he pleased, his aversion to office was due to motives that were not very noble or very creditable. Of a sudden it occurred to him that in arguing him out of his apathy as she was doing, Mdme. de Claire must feel a certain amount of contempt for a man who needed thus to be spurred on to duties which a spirited mind would have undertaken at once with eagerness and pride. This thought flattered his Frenchman's vanity as with a whip, and he felt himself reddening to the roots of his hair. He was on the point of exclaiming that he saw it all now, and thanked his hostess for unsealing his eyes ; but he was arrested by the reflection that he really and truly had no political opinions to use as a banner on commencing his official career, and this was certainly an impediment, for political convictions are not extemporized in a minute like puns or riddles. However, it was in quite an altered and appeased tone that he urged this new difficulty, and said : " If I only had a belief in some system or other ! By rights I ought to be a Bourbonist, but in that party faith is required, and a certain dash of fanaticism. To be an Orleanist one must needs believe in the panaceal virtues of Parliaments, whereas parliaments have never cured anything in France. If I took to Bonapartism I should be obliged to agitate for plebiscitures—Heaven help me !—as if our last plebiscitum were not enough ! "

" Then be a Republican," said Mdme. de Claire simply.

He started a little, for such a suggestion in Mdme. de Claire's mouth was unlooked for. Was this the brilliant courted Baroness whose husband's shield numbered so many quarterings that it looked like a harlequin's coat ? He would have thought she was mocking him, but for her perfect gravity.

" Republicanism," she said, " is a word which we have converted into a bugbear because we have always associated it with noisy people. But why not try and make of it the Government of France by all the most distinguished Frenchmen ? I can scarcely myself in these times understand a man having any other aim. If it were possible to restore the loyalty of the people such as it was in the days when they worshipped the king and touched his garments to be cured of diseases, then I should pray for the return of Henri V. But as this cannot be, and as the only kingship we seem able to tolerate is an expedient that has the bare name of royalty without any of its privileges or prestige, and which besides leads us into distracting revolutions every twenty years ; why not adopt at once the form of government which agrees best with such theories as we still do respect : they are not many but they are good : individual merit, equality and the popular will ? "

He was quite surprised, though not disagreeably.

" I have often thought myself," he rejoined, " what a blessing it

would be if we could sink our differences into a common system that would bring all parties into co-operation. But Republicanism has never succeeded anywhere, not even in the United States, where it is corruption organized, and where it will collapse as soon as the country is peopled enough and respectable enough to wish for honest institutions. The constitution of England seems the utmost to which we can aspire, though I do not even see how we are to be found that."

"Nor shall we," answered Mdme. de Claire. "England is England, and the Liberal papers there call the Queen 'her Most Gracious Majesty'; until our own Opposition journals do the same I cannot see what hope there is of copying a state of things which is based on religious reverence for the sovereign; it would be like trying to make a watch without the mainspring. As to Republicanism," added she, with a touch of patriotic pride that was not without spirit, "I think we are a great nation enough, my dear Count, to set precedents instead of following them. Republicanism has failed up to this moment because you noblemen instead of regarding it as the government of all have treated it as a mere party. You have given it over to be championed by all the most vexing people in the country, and then you complain of it having such unmannerly advocates! Why not be Republicans yourselves, and study to make Republicanism properly understood: there is no form of government under which your influence would be greater or more respected? For as you may suppose I am not advocating a Republic with Mr. Rhetorician this or Mr. Ignoclast that at its head, and a whole attendant train of supporters fresh from the tavern. That is the caricature of Republicanism. My Republic would be the rule of talent and merit under all its forms. No man should be exiled because he was a prince, nor excluded from the chance of honour because he was poor. There should be liberty of speech and pen for all; dukes and counts should bear their titles if it pleased them, though no more empty distinctions should be conferred, and the only difference between this Republicanism and Monarchy would be that instead of setting over us a privileged family to rule by dint of perpetual *coups-d'état* and amid constant panics, you gentlemen, who would make up two legislative chambers, should elect periodically the most eminent man among you to govern the country for so many years according to your directions. I am sure that under such a system as this, that is with Republicanism put under the safeguard of birth and genius, the fussy agitators who are now the high priests of the party would be reduced to making themselves royalists to attract public attention."

The debate, which grew more and more one-sided and more and more convincing to the one who played the passive part in it, was prolonged during a few minutes until interrupted by Mdile. Lucie, who emerging from behind the sofa with the cat Minette in her arms took it up to the Count and laid it on his knees, saying with becoming seriousness: "Dis moi, is he aussi blanc que this your cat Prit?"

"What does Lucie mean by your cat Prit?" asked Mdme. de Claire, amused.

The Count explained, laughing, to what uses he had put the clerical name of Pritchard, and then taking off his watchchain completely, he wound it two or three times round Mdlle. Lucie's plump and pink little wrist : it made a pretty bracelet.

"I have no further use for it now," he said, "and you must keep it, Lucie, as a souvenir of what your mamma did for an incorrigible idler—taught him that we are here to work and not always to please ourselves."

"Then I shall next hear from you at Versailles," observed Mdme. de Claire, with an expression of very pardonable pleasure at the success her arguments had wrought.

Mdlle. Lucie, one is compelled to state, had vanished behind the sofa with a forefinger in her mouth and her eyes fixed upon her trinket as if she apprehended being bidden to return it.

"I am like a knight you will have armed for the fray," answered the Count, rising to go. "I have both sword and banner."

"And I am certain you will distinguish yourself in the lists," she rejoined kindly.

"I could not but act well," he said, "if I had always at hand an adviser like yourself."

His voice was somewhat earnest as he bowed.

She blushed very slightly, and he took his leave. On his way from Beaupré to his own park, and thence, an hour later, to the railway station, John, the groom, noticed that he handled his horses with much greater tenderness than he had done that morning. As for M. Narcisse, the valet, he noticed nothing ; for having heard from the Count's own lips that it was his intention to accept the seat in the Cabinet offered him, that excellent servant was wrapped in meditation as to whether it would not be more politic before urging the claims of his relatives on the Government to solicit of that power (in his master's person) something for himself—say a snug bureau de tabac in a good quarter of Paris, or a place on the customs with a furnished house, a salary of three thousand francs a year, and perquisites ?

III.

When the appointment of M. le Comte de Ris to the Ministership of the Cochin China colonies became an authentic fact, duly notified to the world in the columns of the *Journal Officiel*, the event gave rise to much discussion. It was at a critical moment when the public mind, uncertain as to whether the Government were leaning towards monarchy or the opposite extreme, looked anxiously for the first appointment which should furnish a precise indication. As it was, the appointment furnished nothing, and was consequently, from the official point of view, an extremely clever move. Half the journals in Paris were convinced that the Count was a Monarchist ; the other half were equally persuaded that he was a Republican. Controversies of great bitterness, and in which much irony was lavished, were waged on this subject between rival prints ; and then the newspapers of each inimical section took to fighting pleasantly among themselves as to

which exact shade of Monarchism or Republicanism the new Minister belonged to. This lasted a week, during which the illustrated sheets published portrait engravings of him, and the photographers stuck his *cartes-de-visite* in their windows at one franc apiece. Provincial and foreign journalists also called to beg for biographical details; and an "Own Correspondent" from New York appeared one morning at breakfast-time to interview him through the nose, and ask whether he were any relation to Count de Ris, who had fought under Lafayette, and either beaten or been beaten by the English. Then, this inaugurate hubbub over, the public folded its arms and waited patiently to see the Cochin China Minister at work.

This work was of necessity, at first, occult. As the Assembly was not sitting, no opportunity existed for a public display, and after the Count had received his portfolio at the hands of the President, made his bow to M^{me}. Thiers, and exchanged visits with all his colleagues in the Cabinet, he had nothing important to do but to take formal possession of his two official residences at Versailles and in Paris. A certain degree of solemnity usually attends these installations, and the Count found the whole staff of his office, marshalled in dress-coats and white ties, to receive him. Truth to say, he was not in very good spirits. He had felt sad on leaving his luxurious rooms on the Boulevard Malesherbes for the bleak apartments which the nation put at his disposal in the Palace of Versailles; and though M. Narcisse had assured him with some elation that no less a person than Louis XV. had once slept in the chamber where he was going to rest, this piece of glory had cheered him but slightly. Then a sigh had escaped him at beholding on a wall, as he drove along, the Gymnase playbill announcing the *Visite de Noces*. He had not yet seen this last play of Dumas, and if it had not been for his official dignity he should have been going to dine snugly at the Café Anglais that night, then afterwards to the Gymnase, and between the acts he should have gone behind the scenes to compliment M^{lle}. Desclée, and have a quarter-of-an-hour's chat with M^{lles}. Pierson and Massin. He was, further, painfully impressed by the awe-stricken look which fell on the countenance of the sentry who saluted him as he alighted. He was not accustomed to see people so horribly frightened as this at his approach.

However, state is state, and the clerks in the reception-room looked very stately. There were clerks of every shape, magnitude, and denomination—head clerks, first clerks, second clerks, third clerks, assistant clerks, supernumerary clerks, copying clerks;—in short, more than the pen can enumerate; and all these clerks bowed like one clerk as he dawned magisterially upon their eyesight. To his left walked the Under-Secretary of State for the Cochin China department, a middle-aged Parliamentarian of great tongue power, who had been very strong on the estimates during its Opposition days, but had somewhat neglected this branch ever since his own salary had been included in the budget. This fellow-worker acted as his master of the ceremonies, and whispered names as they sidled along. The Count strove generously by his own urbane demeanour to

provoke something like a sign of life and welcome on the starched faces of the sea of subordinates, but the effort was vain, and the chilliness of the whole scene so reacted on him that he felt his back-bone becoming ironized like that of a provincial mayor who has received the honour of knighthood. At that minute he thanked Heaven that the photographers who sold him for tenpence on the Boulevards were not behind to knock off a new set of portraits ; for, catching sight of himself in a glass, he thought he had never looked so stiff and ridiculous. He had no leisure, though, to pursue his reflections on this topic any further, for by this time he had come to the end of the clerks and reached a spot where stood, mingling with the clerks, and yet distinct from them, as who should say a steeple forming part of the church, and yet overtopping it, a man of venerable mien, with a smooth bald head, who made obeisance to him with humble yet collected courtesy.

Impossible to look more imposing than this hairless veteran, who resembled an image of Nestor, king of the Pylians, shaved and in modern garb. Deep reverence, not unmixed with dread, was observable in the Parliamentary Secretary's manner as he introduced him :—" The Permanent Irresponsible Under Secretary, Monsieur Jobus."

The Count had never heard of the permanent and irresponsible M. Jobus ; but a man who has never heard tell of a sphinx is not the less moved at the sight of one. M. Jobus was the Cochin China office in septuagenarian form. People in the outer world talked of the Cochin China office, its doings, its mistakes ; but they laboured under a wrong impression. That office was M. Jobus ; its doings were his doings, its mistakes were his—no, its mistakes were those of the Parliamentary Under Secretary, or of the Parliamentary Minister, both responsible. M. Jobus as abovesaid was irresponsible. Ministries might fall and dynasties go away by train, but M. Jobus remained where he was. Now and then the wrong-headed public would get up with the notion that things were being done at the Cochin China office which ought not to be done ; and there would be an agitation about it in the papers, then speeches about it in the legislature, finally splits about it in the Cabinet, resulting in the retirement of some Cochin China Minister and his parliamentary henchman. But after this matters would go on at the Cochin China office exactly as they had done before, because in dismissing the Minister and his henchman people had overlooked M. Jobus, which was as if the passengers of the ship that bore Jonah to Tarshish had thrown the captain overboard but overlooked Jonah. In dealing with the affairs of the nation, of the office, or with his own affairs personally, M. Jobus always seemed to bear in mind the golden fact that he was permanent and irresponsible. If anybody belonging to the office fell athwart him, M. Jobus visited him with his displeasure, and this is what would then sometimes happen :—The person visited by the permanent irresponsibility of M. Jobus would appeal to M. Jobus's responsible chief ; but as this gentleman, being not permanent but fleeting, seldom knew much or indeed anything of office matters, he would refer back the appeal to M. Jobus for particulars ; in other words ask for M. Jobus's opinion

on his own judgment. And this might happen several times over, so that frequently a person who held in his possession five or six epistolary condemnations from successive Cochin China Ministers would virtually possess but one reply—that dictated and red dictated by M. Jobus who had acted in the matter as prosecutor, judge of first instance, judge of first appeal, and judge of final appeal. One is happy to add, however, that M. Jobus was a functionary highly appreciated by all who had ever been brought into harmonious contact with him. People had even been heard to speculate as to what the Cochin China office would ever do if deprived of his services; for indeed, men like M. Jobus are not manufactured out of hand in a day. They can only be produced by a long, most delicately nurtured and most carefully guarded career of irresponsibility.

The Count gazed for a few seconds at Monsieur Jobus as if an inward voice told him that here was an official of greater weight than appeared on the surface; then by way of beginning an acquaintance, he said he would always rely on M. Jobus's zeal—at which M. Jobus bowed; that he put the greatest confidence in M. Jobus's abilities—M. Jobus bowed anew; and that he hoped often to have the pleasure of seeing M. Jobus again, whereupon there was a rustling down the whole line of clerks, like the shaking of aspen leaves set in motion by the wind. Somehow the Count could not help imagining there was a symptom of ironical mirth in this rustling. It reminded him of the diabolical notes which accompany the mild-worded serenade in *Don Giovanni*.

The presentation being over, the new Minister was about to pass into his study, but the Parliamentary Secretary, taking alarm, whispered that it would be contrary to all usage not to make a speech. A speech—why a speech? What could the Count have to say to all these gentlemen who were eyeing him as if he were somebody admitted on sufferance, and intruding rather unwarrantably, on the whole, into their comfortable midst? However, the hungry expression in the stare of the clerks and the expectant air on the physiognomy of M. Jobus, told so plainly that without oratory of some sort the days programme would be considered incomplete, that he stood still and in a polite conversational tone said:

“GENTLEMEN,—I shall not forget that which I am persuaded is the guiding maxim of your own conduct, that we are the servants of the public, and should make it a point of honour to discharge the duties confided to us in the fullest way we honestly can. If we bear this in mind, and are conscientious as regards the quality of our labour as well as its quantity, I have every hope that on the day we part we shall do so mutually pleased with one another.”

This was not quite the kind of speech that had been expected, and it caused a moment's astonishment. However, allowances must be made for a Minister new to his work. The venerable M. Jobus started an applauding murmur, and all the clerks echoed the applauding murmur, the Parliamentary Under Secretary chiming in with a sonorous “Good, good,” such as those he delivered in the House, when official persons were holding forth. Nevertheless, the more did the venerable and irresponsible

M. Jobus ponder upon the speech of his new chief, once the latter had withdrawn, the less did he like it. That reference to the public was singularly infelicitous. What had the public to do with the Cochin China office ? Other Ministers, when they made inaugural harangues, began with a compliment to their predecessors, which was a courtly custom and innocuous, that ought not lightly to be set aside. Then they extolled the institutions under which they were living, cautioned their hearers against the perils of anarchy, and wound up with the promise that they would be the fathers of all the clerks, and subalterns in their departments. M. Jobus had seen full a score Ministers come and go who had been fathers to the Cochin China office ; and this sort of eloquence wrought no evil. It was easily digestible, like good pastry—very different from allusions to the “ quantity ” and “ quality ” of labour, the honest discharge of conscientious duties, and so on. M. Jobus fancied he felt something disquietingly hard under this speech. He had read of iron hands covered with velvet gloves, and, though he had never met with such a thing, he opined it must have some such touch as this. His usual peace of mind was far from restored when, an hour after the speech, the Minister commanded his attendance to learn from him the current business of the office.

He found the Count already at work, opening despatches and fresh primed with information which the Parliamentary Secretary had given him. This Parliamentary Secretary made his exit as M. Jobus entered, and then the Count, motioning his new interlocutor to a handsome and uncomfortable chair with an eighteenth century back, listened with great patience, and with more than expedient interest, for a space exceeding two hours to all that he had to say. Fresh Ministers are usually inquisitive, but not, sighed M. Jobus, to this extent. The Permanent Irresponsible was surprised, taken aback, and gradually alarmed to the depths of his soul by the probing nature of the questions which the new-Minister put, by his minuteness in having every detail elaborately explained before passing on to the next one, by his evident intention, in a word, to master all the items of his departmental labours thoroughly, just as if it was he who meant to be everything in the Cochin China House instead of M. Jobus ! The fact is, the Count had not accepted office for his amusement, and, as often happens with men who have never done a stroke of work all their days, he was bringing to bear on his new occupations the reserves of energy accumulated during a lifetime. Such men are a curse and a bitterness to any department where they introduce themselves. M. Jobus had seen no lack of Ministers evince an ardour for reform on accession to power, but this was usually no more than a flash in the pan, a brief mania that subsided under the temperate influence of official atmosphere ; nay, it was one of the curious facts of M. Jobus’s experience that the more a Minister had talked of reform before attaining office the less did he dwell on the subject afterwards—which was perfectly natural ; for when a man has waded through a certain amount of sloppy country to reach a given height, his chief preoccupation on arriving is to change his boots,

and to dismiss, as soon as possible from his mind, all the trying incidents of the journey. Besides, reforming Ministers are general taken up when they first come to power by the material comforts and dignities of their new position—the being housed, and having one's letters posted at the expense of the tax-payer, the being able to say: “Put more coals on the fire, *Auguste*,” without inward pangs as to coals costing sixty francs the ton; the wearing of gold-laced swallow-tails, and seeing pretty women in drawing-rooms wreath their faces in smiles at one's approach—with many other little nicenesses equally new and gratifying. But Ministers of Count de Ris's rank and fortune who have never had to bemoan the price of fuel and stationery, look upon power as a field for active exertions, which exertions, in the case of clear and comparatively young minds, are apt to assume a shape extremely fatiguing for those who are pressed into forced co-operation. M. Jobus had already had occasion to observe this during the occupancy of a Marquis who had worked two private secretaries on to the verge of brain fever, and during that of a Viscount who had caused him, M. Jobus, much mental anguish by his love of statistics. But both these noblemen had, after all, confined their exuberant diligence to questions of great state interest. M. de Ris was the first Minister whom M. Jobus had ever seen show that *Frederick-the-Great*-like disposition, to interfere in those minutiae of the office which M. Jobus had, theretofore, regarded as his private, sanctified domain.

“There seems to me to be a great many clerks?” remarked the Count, when he had pumped the irresponsible M. Jobus pretty nearly dry.

“Does your Excellency think so?” replied M. Jobus, for it was a rule with that esteemed public servant never to commit himself to a downright statement either affirmative or negative.

“They struck me as very numerous. Could you give me any idea of their approximative number?”

“I could not venture to speak with any certitude, M. le Comte,” answered M. Jobus, deprecatingly, the implied corollary being: “These questions really afflict me beyond measure, your Excellency.”

“Well, I should hold it a favour, M. Jobus,” said the Count, “if you would kindly have a tabular list drawn up, stating the exact number of clerks, their salaries, the dates of their appointments, and the nature and amount of work allotted to each. At a time when France is bleeding at all her veins, you must agree with me, that not a centime ought to be spent more than there is any necessity for. And I take this opportunity of begging that you will direct those whom it may concern, that my personal expenses, firing, lighting, furniture repairs, and the wages of the ushers and messengers who specially attend on me are not to be entered in the office accounts. I intend to defray all such myself. Thank you, meanwhile, for your very lucid information.”

M. Jobus shivered from head to feet, and retired, not knowing, for the first time in his life, on what limbs of his venerable person he was walking. And that evening the news went forth through clerkdom that the new Minister for the Cochin China department was a man bent on innovation.

If you can imagine a Cingalese rising amid an assembly of Buddhists, and declaring unexpectedly that the tooth of the fourth Boodh, Gaudama, which all the faithful worship with exemplary fervour, was cut from the tusk of a hog; or a mandarin of Pekin denying in a conclave of his peers, that the Constellation of the Great Dog appeared in the year 647 before the Christian era, and dictated his maxims to Confucius, you may realize the sort of consternation produced by this announcement.

IV.

The press got wind of the matter. That lively organ, the *Cigare*, announced that a strange sight was to be seen at the Cochin China office —A Minister who rose at unholy hours in the morning to work; clerks who were hushed, and attentive to their business, neither reading the newspapers in office hours, nor playing pitch-and-toss with francs as the good old custom had been, but writing continuously and silently, and beginning to look pale from this unwonted exercise. It was further added, that people who now went to the Cochin China office for information stood some chance of obtaining a civil answer. Nobody quite believed this last report, but still it was found entertaining.

It was the truth, however, and not only in this, but in other respects, the Cochin China office had so far changed since the Count's accession, that the excellent M. Jobus began to feel as if he were a stranger there. He was thinning in a manner painful to witness; and besides his leanness, he was growing to resemble Shakspeare's Cassius in this other point, that he seemed to be thinking a good deal, as if there were schemes on his mind that needed ripening. He had submitted to the Count, as it had been his custom to do with other Ministers from time out of mind, certain names for gazetting to posts of emolument, but the Count, instead of ratifying these nominations with a merely formal question or two, had taken time to consider the matter, saying he should suspend all appointments until the tabular list, for which he had asked, had been made out. This list was a long time coming. The Count had appended to his first request a desire that it might include the names of all the employés in any capacity whatever who drew pay from the office. To this M. Jobus had answered, that a great many of the office papers had been destroyed under the Commune; that others were difficult to find, but that he would do his best, and so day after day went by without the famous list appearing. One morning M. de Ris had said very gently, but with a firmness that admitted of no reply, that he should expect the list on the morrow at twelve o'clock, and of course the list had been forthcoming at that hour. But this is the way in which M. Jobus, an old and most blameless functionary, was being treated!

Another grievous thing was this. The Count had, of course, brought with him a private secretary, a young gentleman full of Greek, and with eyes that looked as if they were going to jump out of his head; but he was entitled to a titular secretary holding official rank and salary. For some days no such person was appointed; but on the morning when

the list was handed him, the Count, after an afternoon's study of this document, sent for a clerk, whom it so chanced the venerable M. Jobus viewed with disfavour, and who—though this must only have been a coincidence—had never earned a step of promotion in the course of fifteen year's service. The Count had noticed that all the *précis* in this clerk's hand were admirably careful and intelligent; which was no wonder, for the clerk was probably haunted by some dream of M. Jobus's eye perpetually watching him for a first slip.

“This *précis* is by you?” said the Count, as the clerk entered, and bent low.

“Yes, M. le Comte.”

“You are of long standing in the office; how long must it be before you become a chief clerk? (chef de division).”

“It may be a hundred years, without patronage, less than a hundred seconds if your Excellency wishes it.”

“Very well, monsieur; the first vacant chief-clerkship will be yours, meanwhile you will act as my official secretary.”

On the evening of this occurrence, M. Jobus retired to his bed at an early hour, and, under doctor's advice, took a glass of brandy neat, in a basin of water-gruel.

The Count's next move was to issue a minute with his own hand, stating that he regretted to perceive that the Government stamp of the office was used to frank private correspondence. He was informed that clerks brought the letters of their families in their pockets to despatch gratis, and were even in the habit of sending parcels through the pattern and book post franked. This was a manifest fraud upon the revenue.* It must cease, and for the future the frank would only be affixed by one of his own secretaries on letters duly authenticated as official. In the next place, the practice of despatching Government estafettes upon private errands must be put a stop to. Mounted dragoons might be seen galloping at all hours about the streets of Paris with brown paper parcels under their arms; and a clerk in the Cochin China office was reported to have sent an unwrapped water-melon to his wife in this way from Versailles to Paris, to the great astonishment of bystanders.† Dragoons were not armed and mounted to carry water-melons. In the third place, clerks were requested to remember that civility of speech was one of the duties of their condition.—This last reminder followed close upon an event which had struck as much terror in the department as the fall of a thunder-bolt. An old officer of some sort, fresh arrived from Cochin China, having applied at the office on a matter connected with arrears of pay or pension, had been received in the orthodox fashion, “Tongue-in-cheek—we don't care—and call again,” style. Unfortunately, the Count

* In 1868 M. Vandal, Directeur Général des Postes, estimated at over 1,000,000 francs (40,000*l.*) the yearly loss to the revenue from illegal franking. It must be remembered that the paid government employés of all grades in France number more than 120,000.

† Fact,

had entered at the very moment when the veteran, twirling his hat disconsolately between his fingers, was being sent to the right-about by a handsome sprig, in a blue-striped shirt-collar and a double eye-glass on the bridge of his nose. To the horror of all present, not excepting the veteran, the Minister had cashiered the sprig on the spot; and then, baring his head, had asked of the old officer what he wanted.

It must not be supposed that M. de Ris was in any way blind to the cheerful amount of unpopularity he was storing up for himself by this manner of proceeding; nor was his life a very sunny one. Every morning he received dozens upon dozens of letters from old friends, asking for posts, official recommendations, favours, or calling upon him to assist in the redress of grievances in which, without knowing much about them, he had professed to sympathize in his non-Ministerial days. These letters put his stoicism to a sore test. Three of them taken at hazard from a single morning's post-bag will give an idea of the rest.

The first was from the legitimist Marquise de Rosecroix:—

MY DEAR COUNT.—In proof of the confidence our party repose in you, I ask you not to forget my young brother Gaston in the next distribution of diplomatic posts. Prevail upon Count de Rémusat to send him to a country where the society is good; an attachéship in London or at St. Petersburg is what he would like best. If there be no vacancy at either of these courts, I suppose one could be made for him, either by removing one of the present attachés or by creating an extra attachéship. This I leave to your discretion, but trust you will get the appointment gazetted at once—say next week. Since I am writing I must tell you that the prefect in our department is a shocking man. He is one of those promoted by that horrible M. Gambetta, Pray induce your colleague at the Home Office to discharge him; I think the post would suit the Baron de Sansleson, who is a distant connection of ours, but not rich. I will speak to the Baron about it, and tell him that you will arrange the matter.

Believe, my dear Count,

In the best wishes of yours faithfully,

CLOTILDE DE ROSECROIX.

P.S.—You have probably some post in Cochin China that will do for the brother of our curé, a very worthy man. I will send him to you to Versailles that he may choose for himself.—C. DE R.

The next was from an old school friend:—

MY DEAR FORTUNÉ.—Your blooming out into a Minister is an unexpected godsend. This is what I should like: a substantial governorship in the colonies, which I could hold without going out there, pending a vacant prefectorate worth having. The salary would tide me over present difficulties, which are considerable by reason of unpaid rents; besides, it looks bad at this moment not to be serving one's country. I beg to remind you also that I am only a Knight of the Legion of Honour; my appointment to the governorship would be a good pretext for promoting me to the rosette.

With best respects to your excellent Excellency,

Yours affectionately,

RAOUL DE PLUMEAUVENT.

The third note came from Mdlle. Cabriole, of the Théâtre des Folies Galloises, and may as well be transcribed in its terse, original and artistic orthography:—

MON CHAIR CONTE.—Maintenant queue vous voilà ministre j'espaire que vous allez vous o. q. p. sans retard de plasser mon coussin Jules. C'est un imbecille de la

plus belle o qui n'a jamai rien fait de bon à la maison ce qui est émission pour une famile qui se raiespecte. Ossi ce qui lui fodrait c'est un poste de 6 à 8,000 francs ousqu'y n'y aurait pas troup à faire ni d'argens à gardé crainte de désagrémens. Je vous salu avecq rairespect et vous embrasse de tout queur car on mattend pour la répétission du "Prince Poireau" où j'ai un rôle de laiegume.

Toute à vous,
TA CABRIOLE.

Of Mdlle. Cabriole's claims the Count could dispose by a few bank notes sent in a bouquet ; but how put off the old school-friend who wanted to be a governor, and the Marquise, whose brother was for an attachéship ? It needed all the new Minister's self-control to resist the temptation of doing a little harmless jobbery on behalf of those well-loved persons ; but he did resist, for the Frenchman who has got astride the hobby of performing his duty immaculately, is a being whom there is no unhorsing, attack him from whichever point you will. Nothing could be firmer set than the Count's lips as he sat in his study and marked with a bold R, which stands for Refused, all the letters that appealed to him on grounds purely personal—M. Narcisse, his valet, scarcely knew him again, and half fancied that some devilish enchantment had changed his master in a night, leaving nought of him but the outer cuticle. For gall and wormwood had it been to M. Narcisse, when, on venturing to sound his master about that little place in the Customs, he had received the freezing reply,—“ Ask me for what money you want either for yourself or your family ; but do not presume beyond that.” M. Narcisse had not presumed beyond that, for there are certain inflections of the voice which warn one off like a spiked gate ; but every time he entered his master's presence and saw him conning over and taking notes from a portentous manuscript folio, which was none other than the hardly won Tabular List, he said to himself that this was the cause of all the mischief, and he wished that document at the other side of Jordan ; as, no doubt, did many another denizen of the office, especially M. Jobus.

M. Jobus, however, was on the watch. He knew that it was not mere idle reading, this daily study of the Tabular List, and that as soon as the Count had learned conclusively that there were three times more clerks than there were any need for ; that posts had been created both at home and abroad, which were as good as sinecures, and which had no other possible object but to lodge some protégés or kinsmen of M. Jobus ; when he had learned all this, and a good many other strange things, then there would be a storm. M. Jobus foresaw it mentally, and he was taking his precautions, as a man unfolds his umbrella ; nor had he long to wait. The storm did burst, and broke with violence. One morning the Count told M. Jobus that he intended recommending the Government to dismiss two-thirds of the employés, Home and Foreign, of the Cochin China office ; but that in considering which officials should be dismissed, and which retained, attention would be paid to length of service,—the claim which M. Jobus seemed to have most disdained, seeing that all the names on his list were mixed up in inextricable confusion, promotion appearing to have fallen on no principle whatever, save that of repeatedly advancing certain names, and repeatedly

passing over certain others. M. Jobus protested at this, that he was honest and irresponsible, and the debate was of long duration. It ended by the Count's declaring that he would abide by his resolve ; whereat, had he not feared that it would be accepted, M. Jobus would most certainly have tendered his resignation. He did better. He bowed and said it should be as his Excellency wished ; but in his cold eye it was easy to read that there was a declaration of war.

And what a war ! Let us pass swiftly over the incidents of that tragic contest. The new Minister, in seeking to inaugurate departmental purity, had forgotten that innovation is a weapon which, if not carefully shouldered, kicks as well as hits ; in assailing M. Jobus he had committed the further blunder of supposing that he was only attacking a man, whereas he was buffetting a principle. This is always the way with amateurs, be it in art or politics. Who plashes his yellow ochre and vermilion so gaudily over his canvas as the amateur painter ? Who thunders so headlong at a fence as a gentleman rider ? Who bawls with such histrionic ire as the amateur actor ? Who rams his head so triumphantly against a stone wall as the amateur politician ? Institutions, alas ! are not things that we can go forth to do battle against with our naked fists ; and M. Jobus, the Permanent and Irresponsible, was an institution. He was ubiquitous was M. Jobus ; he had ramifications ; he extended to branches and nooks of the commonwealth where there was no expecting him. There were Jobuses in the Press, Jobuses in the Army, Jobuses in the Church, Jobuses in Society ; each public office had its Jobus : for whether Jobuses by name, or by connection, or by intermarriage, or by ties of interest, gratitude or duty, they were all Jobuses, every man of them, and held together tightly, rising up at the sound of the war-note like a gathering of Scottish clans, and presenting not a bold battle front, but an invisible array of ambuscades, from out of which they shot, whistling their arrows from behind rocks, out of copses, from everywhere. The Minister began to be attacked by the papers, not the large political journals, but the light skirmishers of the press which, in Paris, have most influence. The *Cigare* observed that his trousers were ill cut. Now every man had his foibles, and the Count's was to like well-cut trousers, so he felt the squib keenly. In society it was said that his charming manners of former days were quite vanished, that he had grown a bear, and was becoming mad ; some ladies, always kind, invented that his father had died in a lunatic asylum. In the cafés it was reported that he had only accepted office because he was ruined, having squandered all his fortune in debauchery ; among pious circles people asked whether it were true that he was privately married, but that his wife was a person of disreputable life, who had fled from him to drink. When a man goes to war with the Jobuses he has not many bruises to show, but he is covered all over with stains, as if a million of flies had settled on him.

The warfare had not gone very far, however, before the Great Personage, who had been the Count's patron, was apprised of it. He had selected the Count of all men on purpose to avoid these disturbances, and

it was rather hard that the sagacity of his choice should be so soon belied. Nevertheless it was probably not too late to repair matters, so he sent in hot haste to bid the culprit, that is the Minister, come and see him at once to talk over the business.

"So your cog-wheels are not working quite smoothly, my dear Count?" he said in the friendly tone of one who should remark,—"The Governmental machine is a difficult one for a young hand to manage, but I know what it is and will advise you."

"I am in great trouble with my department, sir," answered the Cochin China Minister. "I have discovered abuses there which I should not have deemed possible, and I have been at work on a comprehensive scheme of reform which I intend submitting to your Excellency, and to the Council, at an early date." The Great Personage, making no immediate reply, the Count proceeded to recapitulate what we already know, and a great deal more that we do not know, and which can be no business of ours, being only members of the public, and consequently debarred from the right of prying too closely into official secrets, which should always be respected. Whilst he spoke the Great Personage, who was standing on his hearth-rug with his back to the fire, kept the glasses of his gold rimmed spectacles fixed on the carpet, and a slight frown sketched itself between his eyebrows, and he seemed to be musing: "How fallacious are appearances! Here is a man we relied on to be soft and assable with everybody, to make us friends, and to let things in general be; and here he comes stirring up a war amongst our own people, just as if we had not enemies enough as it is."

"I do not say that right is not entirely on your side," he replied, in that measured tone which those only can conceive who have ever heard an experienced statesman speak. "Indeed, your conduct in this affair quite bears out the high opinion I had formed of your political aptitudes before inviting you into the Ministry. But, my dear Count, there are cases where we must act with extreme caution. M. Jobus is a very valuable servant; he has been in his post, I think, almost half a century, and half a century is a long time. Then we could not introduce reforms into one department without doing so in all. It would look as if the Ministers were trying to outbid each other in public favour, which would be most undesirable. Again, the reforms you suggest would require money, a great deal of money, and we can afford none; the budget, is the subject of my most anxious cares, I lay awake from thinking of it last night."

"But it is precisely because the budget is so overcharged that I wish to reform and retrench," exclaimed the perplexed Count. "It cannot surely require money to stop waste, to dismiss people who are doing nothing, to abolish posts that are sucking up gold that is so precious."

"To abolish posts is always a serious matter," answered the Great Personage, lifting up his coat tails and speaking with gravity. "We could not dismiss anybody, you know, without compensation. Two millions of francs would be necessary in your department alone. Twenty millions if we generalized your scheme. Where is all that to come from?"

"Two millions—twenty millions!" echoed the Count, aghast. The Great Personage followed up his advantage:—

"I admit that all you urge is very forcible—most forcible. What you tell me of despatches of great value remaining unnoticed; of officials in foreign service being snubbed for conveying information, or for suggesting inventions or improvements; of salaries remaining accumulated in M. Jobus's hands, and of employés being afraid to draw them lest doing so should hinder their chances of promotion—all that is very striking and very new to me. But it is not good that the public should be led to suspect these things, my dear Count: it produces a bad effect. My great aim at this moment is to found an enlightened Republic, and we have need to be united, for our enemies would catch, with pleasure, at any rumours of departmental abuses. Abuses of this nature should always be reformed, *en famille*, quietly. By-and-by, at some future time, perhaps, when we have a great deal of leisure on our hands, we will inquire into all this, and operate gently. Meanwhile they talk of the clerks in your department striking work: this, of course, must be prevented at all hazards. As a personal favour to me, my dear colleague, make friends with your people; and, as regards M. Jobus, the best policy you will find is to be forbearing, for, as I have said, he has really held his present post almost fifty years!"

The clock on the mantelpiece struck twelve.

"That is luncheon time," broke off the Great Personage, gaily. "You will stay and try some Yeddo wine that has been brought me by the Japanese Ambassadors—very curious—it tastes like Malmsey."

After tasting the Japanese Malmsey, the Count walked back to his office. In passing the Boulevard de la Reine he could not restrain a shrug at the thought of the mob who had swept, rabid and hungry, along there, eighty years before, to bring Louis XVI. and his wife to Paris, saying that once the "Baker" was in the capital bread would follow. Somehow he fancied that at that date the irresponsible Monsieur Jobus, already in the flesh, and already permanent in his department, must have been watching the proceedings from behind a curtain, and chuckling to himself, that it was a merciful, though mysterious dispensation of Providence, that the people in performing revolutions should always light upon the wrong culprits. Then he pictured M. Jobus, reading of the execution of Louis XVI. in the *Moniteur Universel*, looking on from his window at the flight of Charles X., figuring as spectator at the downfall of Louis Philippe, raising his hat to the Empress Eugénie on her way to the railway station on the 4th September, 1870, and repeating to himself after each of these catastrophes: "It is certainly a great comfort that I should be permanent and irresponsible."

He imagined that the sentry who saluted him, eyed him askant, as if reflecting: "You're a poor creature." A black dog—perhaps M. Jobus's dog—sitting on his hind quarters in the yard, beside a grey dog, set up a bark at his approach, and appeared to be saying, "that is the man who thought to uproot M. Jobus," at which the grey dog was seized with a

prolonged fit of hilarity. He wrote a lengthy and dejected letter to Mdme. de Claire, confessing all his troubles, his deceptions, his despondency. He explained that he had done violence to his nature to seem other than he was, to be puritanical and unbending, and that it had all broken down. He thought of the talisman "Pritchard," which he used to wear on his locket, and felt it would be wise to have a new locket emblazoned with that same motto. What, indeed, did discussion or worry on political matters lead to? Government and policy were always the same, for Government and policy were M. Jobus.

She answered,—“Persevere; but there is no need for puritanism. Be yourself. Results are not attained in a day, and, as for M. Jobus, I suppose he will yield to time like other crumbling monuments.”

V.

So M. de Ris persevered, not by attacking M. Jobus, but by letting him alone. The Great Personage had given him to understand that the shortest cut towards abolishing M. Jobus, would be to found an enlightened Republic; so he devoted his energies to the enlightened Republic, devising by day and night how such an institution might best be raised. The time for opening the Session was fast approaching, and the large political papers, as already observed, had not assailed the Cochin China Minister on the clerk question from not knowing accurately, as yet, to which party he belonged. They were waiting. If he turned out a Monarchist, the Republicans would lead the assault by taking the part of the poor ill-paid clerks, whom it had been sought to turn out of house and home without indemnity, whilst bloated over-paid officials (*i. e.*, himself,) revelled in anti-democratic splendour, &c., &c. If, on the other hand, he proved a Republican, then the Monarchists would open their batteries upon him by lamentations over M. Jobus, who was an institution of the past, and had been persecuted solely on that account.

The Count resolved to embody his views in the form of a programme or constitution, which he should submit to his friends in the Cabinet, and then advocate publicly whenever he had a chance, in order that no doubt whatever might remain as to what his sentiments were.

This project of constitution began to absorb all his leisure. He read treatises of political philosophy—Plato, Stuart Mill, and essays in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. He took in English periodicals, he sought out Englishmen and Americans in society, and sounded them as to the charters of their respective liberties. Mr. Washburne procured him a copy of the *United States Constitution*; Lord Lyons presented him with Hallam and a *fac-simile* of Magna Charta. The clerks in his office began to breathe. The terrific spell of work that had fallen upon them when that direful Tabular List was being drawn up, loomed backwards in the distance like a forgotten nightmare. They found time to read the news of their country, play pitch and toss, and crack walnuts during office hours as in the good old days; and save that they continued to be civil to the public, nothing was changed from what it had been of yore. The

young gentleman in the blue-striped shirt-collar and with the double eye-glass was even reinstated in his cane-bottomed chair and his emoluments, on expressing contrition for the past, and promising not to put his tongue in his cheek for the future. The Count had never been brusque with his subordinates even when the reforming fever was most strongly on him. He was always courteous and unassuming; but he now fell perceptibly into his old manner of letting things drift as they listed, and judging them all with a smile. He bought a new locket, with the name "Pritchard" embossed rather larger than before and in rubies, to be more conspicuous; the use of it was to keep his temper within bounds whenever he held interviews with M. Jobus. That gentleman continued to rule and be useful, as in his palmiest days. To be sure, when there was an appointment to be filled up, the Count endeavoured to select the best man that he knew; but he had sent his hobby, Puritan, to its stable, and was determined not to risk quarrels with lady or other friends for the empty satisfaction of being treated by everybody as a Jack in office. Thus, his school comrade, M. de Pleumeauvent, obtained the governorship he wanted, Mdme. de Rosecroix was promised a post for her brother, and when a minor vacancy arose for which he knew of no eligible person, he abandoned the nomination to M. Jobus, who always knew of somebody. Needless to add, that water-melons began to travel once again through the streets under the custody of dragoons, and that cork-soles, heaps of newspapers, and novels were despatched about the country with the Government frank, as if nothing had ever happened to check the practice.

In this way time flew by until the opening of the session, a day or two after which M. de Ris completed his plan of a constitution, and had it neatly copied out on foolscap by his Secretary, skilled in *précis* writing. It was a bright December morning when, with the document in his official portfolio, the Cochin China Minister went to attend the Cabinet Council where he intended producing it.

There was to be a question put to the Cochin China Minister that afternoon by an honourable member of the Right, who wished to know whether it were true that a post of dignity in Cochin China had been bestowed upon a convict who had escaped from the hulks (*i.e.* to a Republican who had been transported to Cayenne for his opinions under the Second Empire, and had fled thence). As the Count would have to vindicate his appointment, he had conceived that no opportunity could be more fitting for a public profession of his new faith, and he explained this to his astonished colleagues, who, not having come prepared to hear a new Constitutional programme read to them, sat in blank dismay round the council board, when the Count drew out his manuscript, and perused it aloud with evident satisfaction.

PROJECT OF REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION FOR FRANCE.

1. Two Chambers, *viz.*, a Senate elected by the Councils General and comprising certain ex-officio members, and a Legislative body of 300 members, elected by universal suffrage, for a term of three years.
2. The Senate to be renewable by thirds every two years so that the term of

office of each Senator shall be of six years. The ex-officio members of the Senate to be the President of the Republic on leaving office ; ex-Cabinet Ministers of five years standing, the Chief Judges of the Cour de Cassation, Cour des Comptes, and Tribunal de Commerce ; the Procureurs Généraux of the Cour de Cassation and Cour des Comptes ; Member elected out of each of the five classes of the Institut de France ; the Doyen and sub-Doyen of the Faculty of Medicine ; the Archbishop of Paris and four prelates elected by the Episcopacy, and the three senior Generals and Admirals on active service.

3. A President of the Republic elected by the two Chambers for a term of seven years, and not re-eligible.*

4. Complete separation of Church and State.
5. Liberty of the Press and of public meeting.
6. Trial by jury in civil cases where desired by either of the suitors ; and abolition in criminal cases of "l'instruction secrète."
7. Municipal independence ; each Municipal Council to elect its own Mayor.
8. Appointment of Prefects for a term of five years subject to good behaviour, and abolition of all sub-prefectorates.
9. Compulsory military service for all able-bodied citizens.
10. Compulsory education.
11. Payment of such Senators and Deputies only as shall make an affidavit that their income is below 25,000 francs.
12. Establishment of Divorce, and simplification of the Marriage Laws ; men to be considered of age at twenty-one instead of twenty-five, and free to marry at that age without sanction from parents.

There were some three score more articles that followed the above, which were only the more prominent items of a programme that embraced reform and reconstitution in all its branches—the recasting of the Judicial System alone absorbing a couple of dozen paragraphs. Never had the members of the Cabinet twirled their pens so disconsolately over their blotting-books. Why was this new Cochin China Minister always breaking out in fresh places after this fashion ? Most rueful of all to behold too were the Republican Ministers. If this programme were pushed to a division in the Cabinet they could not well help supporting it, and this must lead to a trial of strength, after which one or other section of the Cabinet must retire. And they were all so comfortable where they were, and the compromise system that had been in force for a year, had worked so well ; and there really was so little need for sensational programmes, or for reform in any shape ! An icy silence followed the reading of the document, and the Great Personage sitting at the head of table wiped his brow despairingly with his silk handkerchief. The Count had not quite been able to understand the silence, but he understood the handkerchief : one has not been a man of the world all one's life for nothing. He rose with an agreeable, though very superficial smile, and said their Excellencies would have time to think about it. Then the Council being over he went out and drove to the House.

* M. de Ris's idea in fixing seven years was probably this. That during a term of four years a President has scarcely the time to give full play to his abilities ; besides which, Presidential elections in excitable countries should not be too frequent. Seven years is a term neither dangerously long nor inconveniently short. A French President, however, should never be re-eligible, for re-election in France would be the certain prelude to monarchy.

But he knew that his days in the Cabinet were numbered, perhaps even his hours. If not sacrificed by the compromise proclivities of his colleagues, he would retire of his own free will, for what could he do in a Cabinet where every effort of patriotism on his part was rebuffed. It must be noticed that the Count, being a Frenchman, was little imbued with the parliamentary spirit, based on mutual concessions and the strong pull, the long pull, and the pull altogether system. He was little able to perceive the ludicrous feature of a Minister arriving with a constitution on foolscap, and demanding all his colleagues to swallow it entire, under pain of Cabinet dismemberment. He did not stop to inquire what it would come to if every Minister drew up a constitution, nor how far Government would be possible, if each Minister absolutely refused to consider office tenable unless all his schemes were submitted to by the rest. He entered the House and made a very freezing answer, in fifty words, to the honourable member who wished to know about the republican who had escaped from the hulks. Then, with his portfolio under his arm, he went to walk about the Galerie des Tombeaux, which acts as principal lobby.

A Minister inspires so much respect to the French mind that deputies uncovered themselves right and left as Count de Ris passed, and many pressed forward to give him news of the Count de Chambord, or of the Count de Paris, or of Chiselhurst, hoping that such might please him, and perhaps induce him to make a statement indicative of Monarchist tendencies. M. Gambetta, also, having somehow heard that he had got to loggerheads with his colleagues, came and shook his hand very cordially. But the Count was not thinking of Chiselhurst, and he had but a moderate faith in M. Gambetta. He was looking for some man of sober sense by conversation with whom he could refresh his excited mind. He stumbled across an English newspaper correspondent who was skurrying along with a note-book in one hand, an umbrella in the other, and a field-glass at his side. He knew this gentleman, and stopped him.

"If you wished to found a republic in England, monsieur," he asked, "how should you do it?"

"We have a republic," smiled the correspondent: "every country where freedom exists with a respect for the law is a republic. The style of the person who nominally governs matters little."

"Then, how do you define republicanism?"

"It is indefinable," answered the Englishman; "but is practicable to those who hold to substance instead of shadow."

The correspondent vanished, he and his field-glass; and the Minister walked on until he came to the model of Bayard's tomb, where, scribbling notes in a book resting on the head of that warrior, stood a chroniqueur of the *Cigare*, M. Timoleon Tartine. It was M. Tartine who had written that the Count's trousers were ill-cut. He would have escaped, if possible, but the Count had taken him unawares, so he brazened it out.

"I know I have been attacking your Excellency," he laughed; "but I had a grudge against your tailor, an old enemy of mine."

" You shouldn't attack those who are for freedom of the press, as I am ; besides, trousers are not politics."

" They are French politics," answered M. Tartine ; " but," added he in huge disgust, " freedom of the press, who cares for that, M. le Comte ? Every day of my life, and of a Sunday in church, when I go there, I pray for a press-law which may make of journalists something higher in the social scale than they are now. Some years ago I held my head high ; I had been twice imprisoned, and every line I wrote was gold. Now my editor tells me every day that he didn't quite like that last article of mine. And why ? Is it that I write worse ? Not I ; but four years ago it was despotism, and as you dared not say much, everything that you did dare say was listened to, even when it was bad grammar. Give me back despotism and Ste. Pélagie ; that's the only enjoyable government for a chroniqueur."

The Minister laughed. " France and England ; there we have them. It will perhaps be an uphill work to rear an enlightened republic with such cariatides as M. Tartine." He had got so far in his soliloquy when a silver-chained usher touched him on the arm and handed a card :—" A lady desires to see your Excellency."

The card was Madame de Claire's, who wished for places in the strangers' gallery for herself and Miss Lucie. She was in her brougham in the courtyard, and had come very bravely dressed in the hope of hearing M. de Ris speak. So she said, smiling, whilst Mdlle. Lucie held out her tiny gloved hand. He told them it was too late, for he had in all likelihood made his first and last speech as a Minister.

" And why ? "

He explained briefly, and she listened with her large liquid eyes so open that he could see himself in them. He felt a little ashamed of himself for having so poor an account to give of two months' power. " But it was not power," added he apologetically. " It has been like stiff ploughing on a hard land which I now see is sterile. It is no good casting republican seed there."

" Oh, if only I had the chance !" she exclaimed naïvely, and then checked herself, blushing.

But the words were out, and he was not slow to profit by them.

" I might try again," he said, looking at her, and speaking cheerfully, yet with earnestness—" if—— He paused for a word, and said in a lower voice—" if the power were made lighter to me by being shared."

She did not ask, " Shared with whom ? " nor was her expression so discouraging that he felt it necessary to tell her. The Boulevard wits in Paris say that Madame la Comtesse de Ris will make an excellent republican Minister when her husband takes office again : for, on the whole, he thought it better to resign for the present. Every time he took his seat at the council board his colleagues looked apprehensively at him, as if they feared he was going to draw a new constitution from his pocket, or, worse than all, suggest some new reforms.

George Beattie.

In a pleasant country, about which many quaint legends and curious stories are told—where is spoken in all its purity that Scotch which, from its idioms, peculiar words, and characteristic broad vowels, is termed Doric—lies the little village of Whitehall, in the pretty parish of St. Cyrus, at the south-east corner of Kincardineshire. There, in the year 1786, was born George Beattie, a man who, both from the value of the poetry he left behind him, and the tragic nature of the latter part of his life, has claims on the kindly and sympathetic remembrance of a generation other than his own. The son of a crofter, who, in the season, could take to salmon-fishing to help him to support his family, he was born and brought up in a small cottage, which boasted only of a “but and a ben,” along with his three brothers and two sisters, who went regularly every morning in merry band to the parish-school. These were the days of simple, homely pleasures and rural festivities, when the more serious business of life was enlivened at stated periods by the merrymakings of Hallowe'en, Hogmanay, Yule, Pasch Saturday, and Carlin Play at Harvest Home. George Beattie's nature seems to have been considerably influenced by the frolic and simplicity of these rustic rites. When George was about thirteen years of age, his father obtained a situation in the Excise, and this led the family to remove their humble penates to Montrose, a distance of about five miles. It was probably with some sorrow that the children left their pretty country home. George, it is said, walked all the distance to their new abode, with a tame “kae” (jackdaw) on his shoulder; and his little brother David, a night or two after their settlement in the town, exclaimed that he was “goin' hame again,” as he did not like “dry tea”—tea without cream in it, for although plentiful enough at the croft, cream was something of a rarity in the town.

Some time after the family settled at Montrose, George was sent to learn a trade, but he continued at it a very short time. He managed to procure a situation as clerk in an office in Aberdeen. His employer died six weeks later, however, and left to his clerk—who, no doubt, was full of despondency at the loss of his situation—a legacy of 50*l.* This was quite a little capital to the young man. He returned to Montrose, and entered the office of the Procurator-Fiscal of the place. After a year or two in Edinburgh, he commenced business for himself as a writer. In this capacity he succeeded well, and attracted many friends by the kindness of his manner, the accuracy of his official habits, and his conversational gifts. He soon established for himself the reputation of being both a humourist and a poet by his poem of *John o' Arnha'*, which first appeared, in

the columns of a weekly newspaper, the *Montrose Review*, in 1815, when he was twenty-nine years of age. He used often to form the central figure of a group that met daily in the High Street to discuss the events of the day, easily recognisable, though by no means of striking presence—a middle-sized man, a little inclined to corpulence and rotundity, with a “black surtout, ribbed pantaloons, worn neat, with black gaiters, and a gold chain and bunch of seals hanging from his watch.” There were no daily newspapers in those days, and the news could only be picked up at odd times and by stray people. It lost little in the telling, and would often be flavoured with many a terse remark or caustic joke. Beattie, probably, heard it as soon as most men, and his quaint drollery often gave it peculiar zest. The boys in the street, we are told, would loiter on their way to school or play when they found him talking in the streets, and they were sure to be rewarded by overhearing some random shot of humour and fun. One day there was a group of men talking at the door of the shop of a well-known citizen. A respectable cabinet-maker, rejoicing in the name of Witheram Dal, an amateur fiddle-maker, was boasting of the excellence of his fiddles. The shopkeeper was rallying him as to his workmanship, and somewhat ridiculing his fiddles, when Witheram in a passion, exclaimed, “They’ve been ta’en to London and to Edinburgh, and been tried.” “Ah,” put in Beattie, “and condemned, and burnt,” which effectually put a stop to the argument. He was fond of practical jokes. One evening, as twilight was deepening into night, he happened to be passing through the churchyard, when he saw coming towards him John—a douce Seceder, wearing a huge Kilmarnock bonnet. Beattie stepped behind a tombstone, and as he passed, whipped off the bonnet, and vanished in the dusk. John looked round in wonder and amazement for a moment, and seeing and hearing no one, fled from the place as if pursued by some uncanny spirit. Next day he is met wearing his Sunday bonnet by Beattie, who greets him with “Ye are braw th’ day, John.” “Ou ay Mr. Beattie,” says John, looking rather put out; “but if this were the proper time and place for it, I could tell you a gae queer story.” And tell it he did, and recounted his own luck in escaping from the unearthly apparition that had stolen his hat. “Well,” Beattie tells him, “one of my clerks was out at the Crancil Braes, and found a bonnet. I wonder if it can be yours?” Up to Beattie’s office they went; and, of course, found the identical bonnet. To complete the story, Beattie had to invent a theory as to the wonderful and supernatural occurrence. Those who had died during the great plague of 1666 had been buried in these sandhills, from a fear that the infection might rise from the ground when the graves were opened. Feeling lonely in these sand-pits, far away from their kindred buried in the old churchyard, they were in the habit of visiting them. John’s bonnet had been seized during one of those visits; but the marauder, not being able to carry it with him to another world, had left it above ground at the Crancil Braes, where it had been found by his

clerk. Such practical jokes were common then, when there was a greater freedom than would now be tolerated. There were rare riots, bonfires, and beer-drinkings in the street, and jolly whisky-toddy parties in private houses. At these and other social entertainments, Beattie's power of story-telling and mimicry made him a great favourite; and although simple and temperate in his habits, and almost reserved in his disposition, he was always ready to oblige the company. One story, or monologue in particular, was called for time after time. The occasion of it happened on a day when there was a total eclipse of the sun, called "Murk Monday," from its having been murk or very dark. Many well-known people in the town were introduced, whose characters and idiosyncrasies, brought into relief by the eclipse, Beattie hit off with that humour which loves what it laughs at. Among these, there were many half-witted, innocent poor folks known as characters—a race which is fast dying out of all but our smallest and most primitive villages,—ranging from Tullygoram (so called from his favourite tune, which he pronounced with a tremendous burr) a crazed captain, who freighted a ship with cats for a West Indian island, to Kitty Pert, a fishwife, to whom, as we shall see afterwards, the poet devoted a special poem. There is a good deal of humour in the slight sketch of two yarn-merchants meeting, one having a very short cough and the other a very long one, and coughing, coughing through the darkness at each other, until, after making vain attempts to speak, they shook hands, to meet another day. Beattie made many friends, not only amongst his own set, but among the poor; doing for them those kind offices which a country lawyer can so often do, while to all he was a sincere, and generous friend.

It is in 1821 that the tragic interest of his life begins. A friendship had for some time existed between him and the daughter of a Mr. Gibson, of Stone of Morphie, so called from a plain, unsculptured monolith, raised to the memory of a Danish hero slain there in battle. She is described by Beattie's faithful, if somewhat vulgar and verbose, biographer, as "tall, handsome, sprightly, and dashing; fascinating rather than pretty," with "rather light-coloured hair and hazel eyes." In the August of this year he began seriously to pay his addresses to the lady. His attentions, though at first nominally rejected, were neither displeasing to herself nor her parents, and he was strictly enjoined not to give up visiting at the house. The intimacy, indeed, rather grew than diminished, and in the spring of 1822 he received the following note from Miss Gibson: "If Mr. Beattie feels inclined to extend his evening walk, a friend will have pleasure in showing him some birds'-nests in the garden at Kin-naber." He met her there frequently, and these meetings led to their becoming engaged to each other. They exchanged many vows of mutual affection and fidelity. One example of these vows is given, and very strange and primitive it seems to us. She complained that he had been "jaunting" without her. He confesses he had been from home, but that it was on business, not on pleasure, and that he had not enjoyed himself, as the

weather had been disagreeable. As he rose to go, Miss Gibson stood before him, and said they must repeat their vows. Beattie said it was not necessary, but that he had no objection. He relates that she made him repeat these words : " May I never know peace in this world, or see God in mercy, if I marry another than you ; or if I ever go south again without taking you with me as my wife." She bound herself by a similar oath.

Early in 1828, Miss Gibson was left a considerable fortune by the death of a maternal uncle in Grenada. At first this did not affect her relations to Beattie. She declared that her fortune did not alter her affections, but, on the contrary, made them more lasting, whatever might be the opinion of her parents. He seems to have wished to make himself perfectly certain of this, and one night pressed her to give a direct answer as to whether she would still marry him ; when she replied, " I mean to say yes, but will you allow me a little time ? " He said, " Certainly ; as much as you choose : it is nothing new. You have thought of it before, and something may intervene." She replied, " Nothing could possibly intervene ; I wish no time. I am yours for ever." This was on the 4th of May. Next day she received letters from her uncle's executors, telling her of some more money which, as residuary legatee, she inherited, and of some West Indian property of which she was to be heiress. On the 6th she wrote Beattie :

Can you, will you forgive me if I ask you to give me back that promise, which I gave you on Sunday ? I then asked for a few hours' consideration : had you given me that it would have saved me this to-day. I then boldly declared that my mother's consent was of small consequence, but that is not the case, and she will never, I fear, consent ; but you know I never mentioned your last letter, and I hope this correspondence may be kept as quiet. That this will give you pain I do not doubt, but better give it now than afterwards ; and believe me, you have little to regret in the want of a nearer connection with me, unless my money, and that is not one-tenth of what they call it at Montrose. . . . I shall only add that there breathes not the man in Europe I at present prefer to you, but still I consider we may be better apart.

This letter caused her lover much pain. In the statement he drew up during the two last years of his life, he tells us that at first he could scarcely credit his senses ; then that he thought it must be a *jeu d'esprit*, to vex him. He soon, however, began to view the matter in the light in which it was intended, and he wrote her a long letter in reply, telling her that she knew little of his feelings when she simply said that her letter would give him pain ; that no language could express his state of mind : he did not think it possible she could have asked anything he could not have granted, if it had been in his power. He now saw he had been fatally mistaken. He could much sooner part with his existence than give her back her promise, come what would. He recapitulates the history of their meetings and love for the last two years. He reminds her of the day in which she pointed out the house which she wished to be purchased or taken for their living in. She had wronged him cruelly in what she said about her money. It had never for a moment been in his calculations. The poor fellow admits to a little touch of jealousy at

the thought of the number of new suitors her good fortune might bring around her, and that on that account alone was he anxious for a renewal of the pledge. He acknowledges that in this thought he was not doing her justice, and in the midst of his misery asks her pardon for such a thought ever having crossed his mind. He thus concludes, embittered into a fierce determination to keep what he justly thought was his own :

I cannot give you back your vow, or rather I should say vows. I cannot give you back your letters—justice, honour, truth forbid it ; the use of these letters must now be regulated by circumstances. I will renounce no claim, but maintain and defend them to the last. There is something so peculiar in this business that I fear I cannot refrain taking steps to justify myself to your parents and the world. It grieves me to the heart to write in this style, but I cannot help it. Unfit as I am for the task, I must take a copy of this before dispatching it. Wishing you more happiness than you have left me in possession of, and improvement in your health, I have still more to say, but cannot now proceed further.

To this Miss Gibson replied as follows :—

I own the justice and truth of all you have written, and now ask your forgiveness. I had not any idea of the pain my letter has given you ; but on that head we are now “quits.” May God forgive you for the harshness of yours ; but I would require to take care what I write, as you are a man of law, and therefore not fairly match ; however, I hope you will answer me by the servant, and tell me whether you will or can forgive me, and believe I shall endeavour not to hurt your feelings again. I allow it was unguarded and highly unfeeling, and I am sorry to say I have no excuse for myself. I have only one thing more to add : if you still wish me to become your bride, I beg that previous to quitting my father’s home, all letters that have passed betwixt us may be destroyed.

In an ecstasy of happiness, the quick rebound from the deep grief he had been suffering, which would not allow him to detect certain marks of stratagem apparent to another eye, he writes :—

MY DEAR MISS GIBSON,—I have this moment received your letter. I am too happy not to forget and forgive what has passed. The trial was severe. You are an angel still. God Almighty bless you. My already enervated frame tells me I could not live without you ; you must therefore be my bride. Make of your fortune what you please ; personally, I neither wish control over nor the slightest benefit from it in any shape, and it will be the happiest moment of my life when I can formally renounce it. I only want Miss Gibson, and she knows I could have begged my bread with her. Adieu, &c. I am yours for ever.

Soon after writing this he met her on the old terms and “all that had occurred of a disagreeable nature was completely buried in oblivion.” She told him that she had made the request only to try him, and laughed at the idea of his having taken up this idea so seriously. She voluntarily took a most solemn oath that she would punctually and faithfully fulfil her engagements with him, and never think of retracting them, while she drew breath. She wished to live a short time at the home of Kinnaber, to which she had just gone, but that after that, as soon as the arrangements were made, their marriage was to take place. One of the numerous admirers that poor Beattie’s jealousy had conjured up, now appeared in the person of a Mr. William Smart, a partner in a firm of corn mer-

charts. Beattie was not slow to perceive that she received this gentleman's advances with anything but reluctance, and he suffered accordingly. Some time afterwards she met him, and she was struck with his looking so unwell. "I made no immediate answer," he says, "and I confess I was a good deal affected, as she looked poorly herself. Miss Gibson then burst into tears, and said she could never forgive herself, for having latterly acted towards me as she had done. . . . She asked me to come back as soon as possible, and said we both would be in high spirits at next meeting." This, however, seemed only a momentary fit of compunction, for she goes on continuing to receive and return Mr. Smart's attentions and sets off on a visit to Edinburgh without acquainting Beattie of the circumstance; when afterwards upbraided by him she tells him that she has been ordered on many excursions for her health, and that this information must suffice for one and all of her absences. This grieves Beattie very much, and in despair he draws up what he calls a statement of facts, which he sends to her father. Miss Gibson obtained this statement from her father, and a correspondence ensues betwixt Beattie and herself on the subject, in which she refers again to her fortune with a twitting cruelty. "I find my fortune has too many charms for you," she writes, "and you are determined to prosecute me or have it." She will submit to anything rather than go into a court of law. She begs him to make no more complaints to her father, as his health was too feeble to permit of his being agitated. She begs him to return all the letters she had ever written him. On his part he says that he wrote the statement of facts in despair. It was sent off in a moment. He need not say if he repented it. He is so overwhelmed with misery that he attempts to fall upon expedients with a view to temporary relief, and in the next instant all appears like a dream. He appeals to his affection for her. He asks her to tell him to go to the uttermost parts of the earth, anything, rather than give her up. He cannot do business, he cannot read a sheet while this misery lasts. To send back her letters, he says, would be like closing the very tomb on himself; and again he breaks out that he cannot permit the engagement on her part to be evaded without seeking every redress in his power. He assures her that he is very unwilling to trouble her with his complaints: he wishes it were possible to suffer in silence. Notwithstanding every exertion he gets worse and worse. No effort of reason or attempt to laugh away his misery has the least effect. He talks of the possibility of something happening to him, in case of which he locks away her letters, with written instructions that they should be delivered to her. He was lately one of the happiest beings in existence, now he is the most miserable.

It now became generally understood in the county that Miss Gibson had abandoned Beattie and that she was going to marry Mr. Smart. A Mr. A—— called upon Beattie and attempted to get back her letters, but in vain. As the approaching marriage began to be talked of Beattie's misery deepened. He began to be apprehensive he could not survive

the day, for on the 8th of August he makes a will, and fearful that she should marry within the sixty days necessary to constitute its legality, he writes to her praying her to postpone the marriage. He tells her that if she marries within the sixty days, his brother and sister will be left unprovided for. After that date she may marry, for he will be no more. "O do not do anything to hasten it!" he bursts out, "not upon my own account, but on account of those who are dependent on me and never have offended you; I never intended to do so—but I do not know myself. Will you yet offer my best respects to your parents. I will never see any of you again, nor the garden, &c.; it is better I should not, it would only make me worse. These recollections are bitter. Will you pray for me?" This letter is answered by her father, who, in his rough way, attempts some consolation, telling him there is as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and asking him to come and see them again as usual. Miss Gibson's own conduct seems to have been very harsh and unnatural. She returned him no answer to his letter. She is even said to have made public his last appeal for delay, and in other ways to have made his feelings a subject of mockery. We get a glimpse of two scenes, which are painfully vivid in the light of the days that were to come shed upon them. The one is of a little noisy provincial theatre, boasting a small stage, and a set of third-rate actors. In a conspicuous position, not so much enjoying the acting as listening to the talk of the people around her, and especially that of one gentleman, sits Miss Gibson, the centre of a group of admirers. Not very far off in a darkened parlour sits a lonely figure, as if beaten down by some great sorrow, his head resting on his arm, all drawn together, as if he would have escaped from any light still lingering in the room. He has just come from his office and has heard from a friend where she, of whose cruelty he is dying, is, and what she is doing. Poor man, the light will soon all be gone; the darkness of night will soon settle over him. But he has to sit there many a weary hour still, waiting till those sixty days expire, and writing those tragic last words of his which he has left us, in what he himself entitles *The Last*. He speaks of a dreadful cloud having hung over him for some days, and he fears he shall never again enjoy the sunshine of the world. Again and again does he recur to the subject uppermost in his mind; again and again does he indulge in the most minute introspection. He trusts that although he finds himself deficient in many respects, and though he dies the death of a wretched suicide, he will be happy, having a firm confidence in the unbounded goodness and mercy of God. He would like to mention his friends and acquaintances, but he is afraid in the agitation of his mind he may forget some of them. "I meant to have written a separate letter to my parents; this, however, I cannot do. I can only think of them with that dreadful degree of agony, that the perspiration falls in drops from the tips of my fingers on the paper. I die as I lived, their loving, dutiful and affectionate son . . . We will all meet in a better world. I have one consolation. They will not be left destitute here."

He tells us he has not slept many hours in the course of two months. He could not read, he could not bear to think. He looks back over a dreary desert, all black and damp with mists, to the happy days when he used to take delight in simple pleasures, the seeking for birdsnests and the playing with children. There occurs in the MS. frequent interruptions, showing that it was written at different periods, the new paragraphs generally beginning with some such sentence as this,—“ After an interval of suffering, I have again taken up my pen. I find no improvement in the state of my mind.” Then he passes into fresh explanation of his own conduct, and fresh attempts to comprehend hers. He cannot get rid of a deep and indelible sense of the wrongs done him. He quotes Campbell’s lines written on the grave of a suicide :—

Ah ! once perhaps the social passion glowed
In thy devoted bosom ; and the hand
That smote its kindred heart, might yet be prone
To deeds of mercy. Who may understand
Thy many woes, poor suicide unknown ?
He, who thy being gave, shall judge of thee alone.

He describes the fact of Miss Gibson’s accusing him of having designs against her property as sickening his very soul. He is sorry that under his sufferings he should have threatened to go into a court of law. That he could there have obtained damages he had no doubt; but he would sooner have coined his heart’s blood than raised money by such means. He tries to reason himself out of his miserable state of mind. He has still the beautiful world around him, the delight of his solitary walks, his troop of friends. He recognises all this. All these objects still exist; but they are not the same to him. He sees them through a totally different medium. “ The smooth mirror of my mind, which formerly reflected all objects in such a pleasing and agreeable manner, and which was a continual source of happiness to me, is now broken and ruffled, and reflects everything distorted, hideous, and disgusting. I am a different being from my former self, and support a different and painful existence.” Once again he turns to her who has wronged him, and assures her that she has his full forgiveness. Then he makes some little bequests. He remembers all the poor people round about him, and leaves a pound to a “ poor man, nearly blind, who often sits on the churchyard brae.” His thoughts drew once more to Miss Gibson, and then to his kindred. “ It is awful to think that I cannot live and cannot die without shocking my relatives. They have not been out of my mind for a moment for a very long time. It is a dreadful alternative. I will make it as little shocking as possible. I will lay down the burden, which I can no longer bear, in some sequestered place; I think in that solemn, sacred, silent spot where my bones will be deposited.” The only thing that gives him consolation is the fact that he is not suffering from any wrong he has himself committed. It is not remorse he is suffering from, nor anything like it. He deplores the fact that the agonies of his mind do not hurt his bodily frame. He is perfectly assured of his

sanity. He could wish to live, if he could only forget the past ; but that he cannot do. Although he has gone about all his ordinary pursuits and mixed in society, he has never forgotten for a moment of time the awful situation in which he was placed. He feels the scene is closing over him. He feels no repugnance at the thought of death. On the contrary, if it had been an honourable one he would have been perfectly happy. Nothing could have had the effect on him that this has had. "Perpetual imprisonment, with all the *squalor carceris* and torture itself, would not have reduced me to my present state. Under all this the spirit and the mind would have remained unsubdued. When these are deeply wounded, all is over. When the heart is sickened to the core there is no remedy. The variegated fields that used to delight me now pall upon my sight, and the changing foliage affords me no delight. I have no refuge, but in the silent and peaceful grave." Once more he dwells, with a low wail of pain, on the old days of mutual vows of affection betwixt them. "Miss Gibson cannot have forgotten, at least ought not to forget, how we anticipated the happiness we had in prospect, and how we imagined ourselves in the possession of all the happiness and enjoyments of the state in which we were to enter—that we hoped to be blessed with pledges of our affection ; and Miss Gibson spoke with pleasure of my fondness for children. Can this be forgotten ?" He had thus been at the very gates of the Paradise he had conjured up for himself—had looked into it, and found it exceeding fair ; and while he looked, a cruel wind came from within the garden itself, and brought desolation around. The last paragraph he wrote is as follows : the lines in *italics* having been erased from his MS. :—

"Well, she has succeeded in bringing about what she wished. She is at full liberty to laugh at me. I suppose few, after all—bad as the world is—will envy her of her sport. It is not in all cases the extent of the wrong, but the reflection of by whom it is inflicted, that plants the sting. When Cæsar saw Brutus stab at him he offered no resistance—his heart burst, and, muffling up his face in a mantle, he fell at the base of Pompey's statue. All is now over. I die in perfect goodwill towards every human being. If my feelings may have led me to say anything offensive respecting Miss G., I am sorry for it. She has my entire forgiveness. If I have erred in anything, I hope she will forgive me, and it will be wise in her to forget what may have passed betwixt us. If I could have done this *I would have been happy. There is no use in repining. I never did so before.*"

He was fully bent on suicide. He went all the way to Aberdeen to buy a pistol. It appears that the first one he bought did not please him, and he returned and purchased another. It is believed he went to his native village, St. Cyrus, and tested the pistol on the door of a salmon fish-house. On the morning of Monday, the 29th of September, he looked out of his office, and said there would be rain. He sent some one to the Kirkbrae, where the distant sky could clearly be seen, and found it did not look like much rain. He then went in and dressed himself, with unusual care, in his best suit. As he was going out, his sister spoke

of preparing something for his dinner, and he answered, "No, Kate, ye'll not do that. I am going to the country, and I'll maybe no be back to dinner, and I can get something—if *I come, if I come*," which he repeated twice. Going out, he turned back twice and spoke about rain. He proceeded to the links, and eat an apple or two from a ship that had just come in. The sun shone merrily, and life was going on as usual about him. The golfers were playing on the links, the tradesmen at their usual work, the reapers binding up the yellow corn, the ships sailing out on the great sea. He passed the woods of Kinnaber, where he had "birdnested" with her who had been so faithless to him. He crosses the North Esk, and hastens to the braes of St. Cyrus, where he had spent his childhood. Amid these scenes he had begun the life he now longed to end. How different is he now to then! Then a happy child, with the world before him, and a brave heart to wrestle with it; now a maimed soldier, returning from the battle with a heart's wound. We lose sight of him altogether after this. No one saw him entering the churchyard where he was found next morning; no one heard the fatal shot, nor knew whether the deed was done while the sun was yet high in the heavens, or after it had gone down in the lurid grandeur of the storm that came on that night. Next morning he was found by a herd-boy and two salmon-fishers, lying near the grave of his sister, in the exact spot where he is now buried. "His hands were resting on his breast, the pistol lay with the muzzle resting on his lip near his mouth, and the thumb of the right hand close to the trigger." His face was not touched in the slightest degree by the powder, and he must have put the pistol as far back into his mouth as he could. Beside him lay a letter addressed to his brother David. It is written in his usual clear and regular handwriting. It is most affectionate, but simply tells him the reason of his suicide, and the provisions he had made for him and his sister.

A few days afterwards he was buried where he was found; and a year later a marble tablet was erected to his memory, containing a lengthy tribute to the benevolence of his disposition, the firmness and independence of his principles, and the force and pathos of his genius. The tomb is enclosed with a railing, round which a wild honeysuckle has twined itself, and where it blooms and is fragrant. And so died this little commonplace-looking man, with the power of inexhaustible love in his heart and the fire of genius in his brain. And some say he was mad, and others that he died of a broken heart.

Of Miss Gibson's feelings about the matter we are not informed. After some interval of time she married Mr. Smart, with whom, it is said, she did not live happily. On their returning from their marriage trip the populace of Montrose, remembering Beattie's wrongs, rose up against them, and they had to take shelter in a neighbouring inn. But this state of feeling did not last. The people got used to see her back among them; and it was only when a stranger was walking with a townsmen, and a fine-looking woman, very tall, very pale, and defiant

in her air, passed, that the townsman would whisper, "That's Miss Gibson!" She lived seventeen years after Beattie's suicide.

We have not left ourselves much space to speak of Beattie's poetry. The principal of these is *John o' Arnha'*, the wild stirring humour and the rollicking fun of which is in strange contrast to the tragic fate of its author. It has been well called a sort of amplified and localized *Tam o' Shanter*. The original of the hero of the story is a certain John Finlay, a native of the little village of Arnhaul. He was town's officer in Montrose, and a well-known character. A local Munchausen, he used to tell endless stories, of which he was always the hero, many of which he used to preface with, "When I was in the army," although he had never served all his life. It is true, as Beattie tells us,

That it had been his happy lot,
Five times to tie the nuptial knot.

He was once asked which of all his wives he liked best. He replied that he "aye liket the livin' ane." During the reign of his fifth and last wife, some one suggested that he had now come to the end of his matrimonial tether. "Na, he kent o' anither dainty body if Maidie dee'd," was his reply. Some one remarked that he must be a rich man; some of his many wives must have brought him money. "Na," said he, "it was little he made by them, for they all cam' wi' an auld kist and went and ga'ed awa' wi' a new." Such are some of the stories told about the original John. According to Beattie, one fine May morning,

When dewie drops refreshed the corn,
And tipt ilk stem wi' crystal bead,
That glistened o'er the spangelt mead
Like gleam o' sword in fairy wars,

he came to a *Fair* at Montrose, and worsted the doughty Horner, a celebrated Montrose beagle, in single combat; with the original of whom John Finlay had had many a combat with words. Of this beagle there is told a story about his employing a man to write a letter to some of his friends, announcing the death of his wife. There was some difficulty about the way in which his feelings were to be described. The Horner assures him it must be something very lamentable, and asks him what he would suggest. The man asks him if he shall say "He is like a dove mourning for its mate." That was not considered strong enough. "Like a sparrow on the housetop alone," is next suggested. That was better, but not quite the thing. On the man proposing "like a bear bereft of her whelps," he exclaimed, "Ay, put that down, it's the very thing." There is a story told about a neighbour of his, which may find a place here. A worthy man, with a little capital set up a wool mill. Coming home one evening at the end of the first year he appeared in great good-humour, and meeting his wife at the door, he says, "Ye'll mak' a drap tea till's, gudewife." Tea was then a considerable rarity, and looked upon in the light of a luxury. "Ou ay," says his wife, "but what's ado wi' ye the nicht?" "Eh, 'oman, the milly's doin' fine; she

has cleared hersel' already and something forbye." The next night he was looking rather disconsolate. On his wife inquiring if again he was to have tea, "Na," says he, "we'll ha'e nae mair o' that stuff. That stupid blockhead Jock, in balancing the books, added in the Anno Domini along wi' the pounds!"

After his victory John sets about returning to Arnha'. He loses himself in the dark beside the North Esk and is met by a water-kelpie. The unearthly monster finding herself beaten, and enraged by listening to John's bragging of his illustrious exploits, and of this his last and greatest, calls in a legion of witches and warlocks, before whom John's spirit quails. These are accompanied by the ghosts of those John had slain in his encounters, and when he is put on his trial before Satan as judge, they give evidence against him. Just then

Aurora peep'd athwart the gloom,
The grey cock clapp'd his wings and crew,
And helter skelter, swift off flew
The deil and a' the infernal crew.

And John returns to tell his wonderful adventures to one of the

Five sweet flowers,
As ever blush'd in bridal bowers.

The poem is full of grotesque imagery and fun, through which there runs a strain of pathos. The Scotch is capital, and as forcible and descriptive as the most enthusiastic admirer of the language could wish. Of his other poems we may mention *The Murdent Mynstrell*, which contains some pretty lines :—

Her haire was faire, her eyne were blue,
And the dimples o' luve play'd roun' her sweet mon',
Ane angell from God mocht ha'e kist that sweet face,
And returnit to heaven all pure from the embrace.

The Dream contains some very effective passages, and is throughout highly poetic, reminding us in some points of Ossian. *Kitty Pert*, of whom it is said "she liket zneeshin and liked it zcented," is full of spirit, and is worth study from the peculiar nature of the dialect, then common among the fishing population of Montrose, and very unlike the surrounding Scotch. The following lines were found after his death, along with the statement which he named *The Last*, and bear the impress of the despairing state of his mind :—

Say, what is worse than black despair,
'Tis that sick hope too weak for flying,
That plays at fast and loose with care,
And wastes a weary life in dying.

Though promise be a welcome guest,
Yet it may be too late a comer,
'Tis but a cuckoo voice at best—
The joy of spring, scarce heard in summer.

Then now consent this very hour,
Let the kind word of peace be spoken ;
Like dew upon a wither'd flower,
Is comfort to the heart that's broken.

The heart, whose will is from above,
May yet its mortal taint discover ;
For Time which cannot alter love,
Hath power to kill the hapless lover.

The Prince of Tarente's Love Story.

AMONG the least known, but certainly not the least interesting, of the many memoirs left us by the contemporaries of Mazarin, are those of Henri-Charles, Prince of Tarente. The writer was the heir of the great house of Tremouille, than which there was not a wealthier or a nobler in old France. The head of the family was duke and peer. He had even some pretensions to royalty through his descent from Frederick of Naples, a monarch who died deposed towards the beginning of the sixteenth century. These pretensions were of value, inasmuch as they enabled the Tremouilles to assume the addition Highness, which placed them on a level with the multitudinous sovereign princes of Germany, and, therefore, above all that was merely noble in France, or elsewhere. Thanks to this addition, the Tremouilles mingled blood with royalty until they were akin to every crown in Europe. But their proudest alliances, or at least those in which they ought to have taken most pride, were contracted a little lower. For instance, the Prince of Tarente's grandmother was the daughter of William the Silent; his mother was the sister of Marshal Turenne; his grandfather's sister was the grandmother of the great Condé; and his aunt was the noble lady who defended Latham House. Thus, wherever he looked for a near relative he found a heroine or a hero. Nor were his ancestors less distinguished. They were all full of valour and loyalty, and most of them warriors and "die-hards." One of them fell under sixty-two wounds at the battle of giants (Marignan). Another was "the great cavalier without reproach;" the man who won more victories and uttered more brilliant epigrams than any of his time; he who coined the glorious phrase, "a field of battle in a just cause is the bed of honour;" and who, closing his career as a soldier should, died at the age of sixty-five, while interposing his breast between his king and the German lances on the field, where France lost everything but reputation.

It was natural that the child of such a race should manifest the aspirations of a warrior at an early age. But the Prince of Tarente was a youth of feeble constitution, and an only son besides. Instead, then, of acceding to his wishes, his parents retained him in leading strings much longer than was customary. At the age of eighteen, when court and camp were thronged with youths no older than himself, some of whom had already begun to play a brilliant part—he was still under the control of a tutor, and treated in all respects like a school-boy. Wearied of this thralldom, which to him seemed positively ignominious, he determined to abscond, and early in 1638 he found an opportunity. Both parents were absent, the Duke in one of his governments and the Duchess in attendance on the Queen, while he was left with his tutor in Paris. Money, however, was

necessary, and he, the heir of countless millions, had not a sou. But from this difficulty he was extricated by his valet, Roussel, whom he had taken into his confidence, and who contrived to scrape together 100 crowns. With this small sum in their pockets, and a bundle on each of their shoulders, they stole out at nightfall, and afoot, looking not unlike a couple of travelling artisans. Two leagues from Paris they took post for Dieppe, which they reached next morning; and almost as soon as themselves arrived one of the numerous couriers which the Duchess had despatched in all directions in pursuit—for their flight had been discovered immediately. The governor of Dieppe dared not arrest such a personage as the heir of Tremouille without a formal warrant—a document which had been quite overlooked in the hurry. It was not likely to be long delayed. But meanwhile something had to be done; and the governor did that something in the style of a born official. Rightly surmising that the Prince was bound for Holland, he issued an order forbidding any shipmaster of that country to give him a passage. This was effectual so far as it went, but it did not go far enough. There were other routes to Holland beside the direct one—a fact which the worthy governor does not seem to have suspected until it was thrust rather disagreeably under his notice. While his men kept sharp watch over all the Dutch vessels in the harbour, the Prince went quietly on board an English one that happened to be getting under weigh, and in twenty-four hours more was landed safely in Devonshire. From thence he hurried to his aunt, the Countess of Derby, in London, where his unusual exertions threw him into a fever that confined him for two months. On his recovery he resumed his journey, reaching the Hague without further accident.

From the Hague he communicated with his parents, who very wisely made the best of the matter. It was clear that he was resolved to be a soldier. It was equally clear that, if not allowed to fight under his great relative, he would seek another and probably more dangerous service. So instead of complaining or taking measures likely to render him uncomfortable in Holland, they did their utmost to fix him there. The Duchess undertook to allow him 30,000 livres a year; and in concert with her the Duke requested the Prince of Orange to give their son an office that would establish him in the country—which the Prince did. De Tarente, however, was soon fettered to the Low Countries, by a tie far stronger than any twined by interest or glory. Military enthusiast as he was, he contrived to lose his heart long before he won his spurs—the object of his attachment being the eldest daughter of the Prince of Orange.

By this time the campaign of 1688 was over, and De Tarente had no chance of getting his head broken that year. But, in return for his disappointment, he was included in the brilliant company that escorted Prince William of Orange to be married in England. "We set out to embark at Hoelvoetsluys," writes he, "but the contrary winds compelled us to pause at the Brille. After lingering there for two weary days, I could not refrain from returning to bid a second farewell to Mademoiselle

d'Orange. Hardly, however, had I reached the Hague, than the wind changed and I was obliged to retrace my path at full speed. Setting out at daybreak I soon reached Maaslandsluys, a place separated from the Brille by an arm of the sea, which, at ordinary times, may be crossed in about three-quarters of an hour. Here I found only one small boat which was manned by a single seaman. The sea was rough and the craft crazy, but, having no choice, I embarked with Beaugendre, my sole attendant on that occasion. A short distance from the shore the waves ran so high that the boatman, though accustomed to these waters from infancy, grew apprehensive and proposed to return. But, being anxious to reach Hoelvoetsluys before the fleet put to sea, I would not hear of this, and we continued our course. The wind increased every instant, until it blew a violent storm; the boat became altogether unmanageable, and we were in great danger. Giving us up for lost, our Dutchman began to howl with all his might, and continued to do so until he could howl no longer. He then very calmly lowered the sail and allowed the skiff to drift. How we kept afloat in that tumult of winds and waters is more than I can conceive. Myself and my attendant fell on our knees, and our howling companion, who hardly knew what he did, followed our example. Having finished my prayer, I made use of the little Flemish I knew to remind the boatman, who was nearly helpless with fright, that Providence prefers to aid those who do something for themselves. As a practical comment I ordered him to spread the sail again while I took the helm. This manœuvre was not a happy one. I was far from being an accomplished pilot, and the boat under my direction bobbed about in the most extraordinary manner. The wind, however, soon put a period to my nautical display by snapping the mast in two and dashing the sail down on us. The catastrophe soon followed. While we were floundering under the sail the boat upset and pitched us into the water. What happened during the next few minutes is a mystery to me. All was dash, splash, darkness, and confusion. At last I shook my head clear of the spray and found that we were all three clinging to the same side of the boat. Here we floated about up to the neck in water, and expecting every moment to be our last. Beaugendre unclasped his mantle and proposed that we should try to save ourselves by swimming. It was some time before I could make out what he meant, for the wind blew one-half of his words out of hearing, and the billows swallowed up the rest. When I did understand him I showed him the futility of such a scheme in the midst of a tempest, and so far, not less than two leagues from the shore. Indeed, it was only when lifted on the crest of the waves that we could catch a glimpse of the buildings. A sudden gust now righted the boat, but before we could get in another overturned it again. This happened three times over. At length it resumed and retained its proper position, the wind gradually subsided, and in three hours more we reached the Brille." The escape was a narrow one. Still it was an escape, and De Tarente was rather pleased than otherwise that his romantic impulse had led him into

so much peril. Three or four days afterwards he found himself in London not at all the worse for his ducking.

During his stay in the British capital he involved himself in a quarrel which is far too characteristic of the period to be omitted. The Dutch company was distributed all over the city, the young Frenchman being assigned a lodging in Arundel House with his principal, while another near relative, Count Henry of Nassau, was quartered elsewhere. The latter, however, not liking his billet, transferred himself to Arundel House, where he appropriated an apartment intended for De Tarente. The latter thus describes what followed :—

“I remonstrated with Count Henry, who replied with haughtiness. A quarrel ensued, and we drew our swords, but were immediately separated. Monsieur de Brederode carried off my antagonist, and I retired to my chamber. No sooner had Prince William heard of the dispute than he sent for us both and made us promise to forget the past. I, however, had no wish that the matter should end thus. I consulted my friend D’Harcour, who was captain in the regiment of cavalry which Prince Frederick Henry had bestowed on me. ‘This,’ said I, ‘is my first affair of honour, and I had rather be blamed therein for rashness than praised for circumspection.’ D’Harcour replied that he would be very willing to bear my challenge to Count Henry; but that to do so with effect it would be necessary to await the termination of the festivities, and to find another pretext. As to the original subject of quarrel, he showed me that it would be a mistake to revive it, since I would thus compel Prince William, who had attempted to reconcile us, to take part against me, and in that case I must inevitably be excluded from the rejoicings. I thanked my friend for his advice, and promised to follow it very exactly. On the evening of the wedding day I happened to meet Count Henry at the house of a lady of quality. There were many guests present, and a great crush followed when the party broke up. Expecting this, I designedly placed myself behind the Count. The pressure compelled him to push me rather roughly, but of course quite unintentionally. It was, however, precisely what I desired. Telling D’Harcour that I had now the requisite pretext, I described my conduct. He approved of it, and the moment the ceremonies were over bore my challenge to the Count. The latter excused himself, declared that he had not the slightest wish to insult me, and flatly refused to fight. He added that he was ready to explain the cause of his refusal, which he afterwards did in the presence of many. I was waiting his reply in the house of the Marquis Vauville (the French Ambassador) where D’Harcour repeated it before a large company. Next morning we were both placed under arrest, and some censure was passed on my youthful heat.” So terminated our autobiographer’s first essay in the art of duelling made easy. The second, as we shall see, he found a little sharper.

Family matters drew De Tarente a second time to England in 1639. There he was again attacked by fever, and before he could recover the

campaigning season was over. On his return to Holland he embraced Protestantism, which had been the creed of his childhood and was still that of his mother, and from which, indeed, his father had but recently seceded. We do not for a moment question his sincerity on taking this step. Men, however, are easily persuaded when inclination seconds argument. And Mademoiselle d'Orange was a Protestant of the Protestants.

He made his *début* in war in 1640, much like his uncle Turenne, that is, carrying a pike in the ranks. It was the good old custom of the Orange princes thus to train their relatives for command by first teaching them to obey, and the result was many excellent captains. Nothing of importance occurred that year. During the next, the young Frenchman commanded a regiment of cavalry, and did good service at the siege of Genep. He particularly distinguished himself by his strict attention to details, conduct as unfashionable with young soldiers then as it is now. He, however, had no reason to be dissatisfied with it. After the capture of Genep, his regiment occupied an advanced and therefore dangerous post. For this was peculiarly the era of great partizan feats, and an isolated corps was always liable to surprise. The Prince was fully aware of his risk, and for four days and nights was unsleeping. Not a straw could move in his vicinity without attracting his attention. Fatigue at length brought on a serious illness, and he retired to Bergues, leaving his major, who was much less vigilant, in command. Two days afterwards the Spaniards swooped down on this officer and carried him off with the greater portion of his regiment.

The next campaign was opened by De Tarente with a duel which we shall allow himself to relate. "We were encamped at Rhimberg, when I was challenged by Prince Radzival, whom I had occasionally seen in my visits to the Queen of Bohemia. The Prince was remarkably assiduous in paying court to that royal lady, whom he affected to regard as his mistress. (Elizabeth Stuart was then forty-seven.) One day he thought it right to be offended because I had taken a place near her which he wished to occupy. He requested me to surrender it, but with a tone and manner so overbearing that I could not comply. Our dispute alarmed the Queen who sought to reconcile us, and even made us embrace in her presence. I was persuaded that the affair would go no further; but, unfortunately, some mischievous people spread a report that my countrymen, who were numerous at the Hague, would twist the occurrence if it remained as it stood to the glorification of their country and to the detriment of Prince Radzival. No sooner had this report reached the Prince than he hastened to the camp. I accepted his defiance, and it was agreed that the encounter should take place with swords about a quarter of a league from where we lay. We met as appointed. D'Harcour, my second, measured the weapons, and found that my antagonist's blade was the longer by at least half a foot. The Prince immediately offered to exchange it for mine. As I would not agree to this, the question was decided by lot, which gave each of us his own weapon. We fought on

horseback, and the combat was soon over. I dealt Prince Radzival a thrust which merely pierced his shirt. He replied with another that would have been as harmless had I been better armed. A guard would have arrested and turned his stroke, but my sword had none. His point, therefore, pierced my wrist, and, running along my arm, ripped it open right up to the shoulder. I dropped my sword and fell. Some of the prince's people raised me and tied up the wound, while others hurried in search of a surgeon. Fortunately for me they had not far to seek. One named La Sage happened to be at hand and saved my life by his diligence. To staunch the blood, which flowed in torrents, he was obliged to take up several veins and arteries, an operation which I found intensely painful. He renewed the dressings in another hour, causing me even more agony than at first. Nevertheless, I slept soundly that night. And three weeks afterwards I was on horseback at the head of my regiment, ready to charge a body of two thousand cavalry which threatened the quarter of the camp where I was posted." The prince's memoirs make no further mention of duelling. We may presume, therefore, that this encounter blunted a little the rather too keen edge of his sense of honour. As to his wound, it did not prevent him from keeping the field until the close of the campaign, nor from sharing in the next. But when the armies went into quarters, towards the end of 1642, it was still unhealed, and even compelled him to spend a month at the waters of Barege.

From Barege he proceeded to Thouars, where his parents were then residing. "But," he writes, "I resumed the route for Holland as quickly as possible. For hardly had I reached Thouars than I found that my father intended to wed me to the sole heiress of the last Duke of the name of Rohan. This young lady was decidedly the greatest *parti* then in France. I, however, was too strongly attached to Mademoiselle d'Orange to form any other engagement. Nor was it long before I found means to stifle my father's project completely. My friend D'Harcour had a cousin who was in the confidence of the De Rohan. By my direction he wrote a letter to his relative, in which he acquainted her that my affections were already bestowed. This letter was shown, as I intended, to Mademoiselle de Rohan, and it is not difficult to conceive its effect on a spirit so proud." An explanation with his parents followed. "Mademoiselle d'Orange and myself," he informed them, "have long understood one another. We have the same tastes, the same inclinations, the same sentiments. And she has vowed that she will never wed another." The Duke and Duchess were perfectly satisfied with their son's choice, and at once proposed in form for the hand of the young princess. They anticipated little difficulty in obtaining it. The two families were on a level in point of wealth, descent, and pride. And they had already intermarried. Hardly half a century before the greatest of the Orange princes had bestowed his daughter without reluctance on a Duke of Tremouille. Times, however, as the suitors were to find, had greatly altered since. While the claim to the Neapolitan crown had ceased to be much regarded, the long possession

of the foremost office in the republic had taught the members of the House of Orange to look upon that office as their property. It was substantially regal. They considered themselves, therefore, quite on a level with royalty, and adopted royal ideas in all matters marital. All this, however, was only in its infancy. And when the Prince of Orange replied to the Tremouilles—in the usual style of those days of chaffering and bargaining for courtly brides—that his daughter's hand was reserved for the son of a king, or for an elector at the very least, they were far from considering that reply as conclusive.

It was true that, at this very moment, there were two other very high-born rivals in the field. One of these was the Prince of Wales. But the state of England, where civil war was then raging, rendered his pretensions of little consequence. A more formidable competitor was the Elector of Brandenburg. He, however, though afterwards to be termed "the Great Elector," was at that period supposed to be a mere puppet in the hands of those who happened to possess his confidence. And for this confidence there were then two claimants. Of these his mother, an energetic woman, was known to be exceedingly adverse to the Orange alliance. It was advocated, indeed, by the favourite Borsdorff. But the latter was far from wielding the paramount influence with which he was afterwards credited. Thus nobody could guess how the Elector would finally decide. On the other hand, besides recommendations which were neither few nor light, De Tarente was a relative, a prime favourite, of the good-natured Frederick Henry, and a fast friend of the young Prince William. Mademoiselle d'Orange, too, was largely gifted with the obstinacy of her country. Himself and his friends, therefore, considered it of the less consequence, that the Princess of Orange, who was a very unsentimental dame, should declare herself strongly in favour of the Elector.

The first results of the proposal made by the Tremouilles were not favourable to the lovers. The Princess of Orange had yet to learn how far the love-making had gone. Still she thought it her duty to divide the pair as much as possible, and to treat the gentleman with marked coldness. "This change," he states, "was soon noticed. There are always people at court who do not scruple to advance themselves at the expense of their neighbours, and Mademoiselle de Portugal was exactly such a person. She was the grand-daughter of that Don Antonio who had been despoiled of his kingdom by Philip II. of Spain, and whose son Emmanuel had married Amelia, sister of Frederick Henry. Without fortune, or any settled position, she was the humble servant of her aunt, and gladly followed the directions which she received to watch her cousin. So well, indeed, did she play her miserable part that I could never find Mademoiselle d'Orange for one moment alone. All confidential conversation being thus interdicted between us we resorted to writing, and soon found a safe medium for the conveyance of our correspondence. This medium was Mademoiselle Hanau, another companion of the young Princess. Being the sister of the reigning landgravine of Hesse Casel, with one of

whose daughters the Electress of Brandenburg desired to wed her son, she was completely in the interests of De Tarente, and besides taking charge of his letters, kept him well acquainted with all that went on at the Hague.

Thanks to the obstacles thrown in its way, the suit of the Elector of Brandenburg progressed but slowly. Young Tremouille, therefore, rejoined the army when the fighting season recommenced, with little anxiety. In the course of the campaign he met with an odd adventure. The troops were encamped in the neighbourhood of Ghent, and the Prince had charge of the outposts, where he discharged his duty with his usual scrupulous attention to minutiae. "Returning one morning to my quarters," he writes, "I found that the brigade was on the point of marching away. I threw myself on my bed, dressed as I was, and slept about an hour—until, in fact, I was roused by a general blast of trumpets. No sooner were my eyes fairly open than I saw the village curé enter the room. I learnt from him that the plague was in the hamlet, and that the Prince had just ordered it to be evacuated. He added that he verily believed the house in which I had taken up my quarters to be one of those infected, and that if I thought fit to have it searched I would find concealed therein the dead bodies of its late master and mistress, which the sudden arrival of the army had hindered their friends from interring. The curé was right. My servants pulled to pieces the bed whereon I had just been reposing, and there, stowed away in the mattress, they found the two dead bodies." The siege and capture of Hulst followed without any occurrence worth special notice. This closed the war for the year. The troops were then distributed in winter quarters, and De Tarente accompanied the Prince of Orange to the Hague, where, as he observes, he was destined to suffer much annoyance.

We must now go back a little. Shortly after the armies took the field the Princess of Orange received a hint of her daughter's secret correspondence, and took measures to obtain a full acquaintance therewith. These measures were not very creditable, being in fact precisely such as are supposed to be confined to the scoundrels of our modern sensational novels. One day, during the heat of the fighting Mademoiselle de Portugal, taking advantage of the temporary absence of her cousin, entered her apartment attended by a clever locksmith. Certain locks were then carefully opened and as carefully refastened after certain letters had been abstracted. The locksmith and the lady afterwards vanished, leaving not a trace of their handiwork behind them. The letters of course were handed over to the Princess of Orange, and she was not delighted with their contents. They revealed a state of things of which up to that moment she had not entertained the slightest suspicion, and which threatened to interfere very seriously with her projects or the aggrandisement of her family. They gave evidence in every line that matters had gone as far between her daughter and her lover as they could fairly go. And beside the letters were not flattering to herself. "In

some of them," explains the writer, "I besought Mademoiselle d'Orange to make a confidant of her father, of whom she was the favourite child; in others I spoke of the ease with which I expected to obtain the consent of Prince William, her brother; and in one or two I complained sharply of the proceedings of the Princess her mother." In what spirit the latter perused these complaints we are not informed, but it is not difficult to conceive. She did not fly off into a towering rage; such exhibitions were foreign to her temper. She determined to have her "revenge" in another and more useful way, as we shall see. The Princess handed the letters to Prince William, who received them with the remark that he should know what course to take when he had gone through them with calmness. "His reply alarmed the Princess," says De Tarente, "and she began to fear that he was a party to our purpose. Nor was she altogether mistaken. That night, when every one was asleep, the Prince entered his sister's chamber. Thanks to the skill with which the theft had been effected, she was still ignorant of the loss of her letters. Prince William began with reproaching her for concealing our engagement from him. He told her that he was my friend and that he would gladly assist us, provided she gave him her full confidence. Thinking that he spoke thus merely to obtain an avowal of her secret, she declared that he was mistaken, and that she had nothing to reveal. He pressed her again and again to be sincere, said that he knew more than she suspected, and repeated his offers to serve us if we would only allow him. 'But,' continued he, 'if you will persist in making me a dupe, I warn you that I will oppose you with all my power.' Nothing, however, that he could say had any effect on her obstinacy, and both growing angry, they parted with much bitterness. As the Prince quitted the room he drew one of my letters from his pocket and showed it to his sister. She ran to her drawers, discovered her loss, and then comprehended the full extent of her error. She sent her maid after her brother who refused to return. Going straight to his mother he agreed to second all her views. When Mademoiselle d'Orange apprised me of what had passed, I blamed her for withholding from her brother the confidence he demanded. She, however, made light of his threats, never doubting but that she would be able to regain him by means of her friend, Mademoiselle Wilhelmine de Nassau, to whom he was tenderly attached." She was a little too sanguine! A member of the House of Orange was seldom known to abandon the side which he had deliberately taken.

On arriving at the Hague at the close of the campaign, De Tarente was subjected to much annoyance. The Prince of Orange was reserved to him, the courtiers avoided him, and he was in a great measure excluded from the palace. An attempt was even made to remove him altogether by giving him an uninviting command on the frontiers. This scheme, however, he met and vanquished with sharp decision. Taking advantage of his military position, he forced an interview with Frederick Henry. An explanation followed. He found that those who had stolen his letters

had not scrupled to falsify them. An odious description had been given of many of them. Detached passages had been communicated to the Prince of Orange. Some of these were inventions from beginning to end, and to others such additions had been made as were considered most adapted to excite his indignation. "He cited two or three of these passages," says De Tarente, "which were not in my letters. I demanded that these letters should be produced, adding that if there could be found in them but one of the paragraphs of which he complained, I would consent, not only to forego his favour, but to suffer the most rigorous punishment he could impose." The Prince of Orange admitted the justice of the demand, and sent for the letters in question. Of course he did not receive them, for the simple reason that they had never existed. This he saw very clearly, and completely exonerated De Tarente. The latter then spoke of his hopes. Frederick Henry heard him patiently, even with kindness. His reply was not encouraging, but neither was it a prohibition. "You are my friend and relative," said he, "and would not wilfully oppose the welfare of my house. You are aware of the offers that have been made for my daughter's hand, and you cannot be astonished if I should prefer one of these personages to even yourself."

The lover now endeavoured to soften the princess. "But," he says, with a strength of expression unusual to him, "she spouted all her fire upon me. During the two long hours of our interview she spoke of nothing but steel and poison. Neither excuse nor submission could make the slightest impression on her. Her mildest and most consolatory remark was spoken as I quitted her. And that was, that she had not sufficient strength to vanquish her resentment; but that, should I change my conduct, she would beseech heaven to give her grace enough to pardon me."

De Tarente next had an interview with Prince William, who received him in a way peculiar to himself. "Whenever I attempted to broach the matter, I had at heart," sighs the unfortunate youth, "he interrupted me with some remark altogether irrelevant. I could never make him understand me. Our conversation was a tissue of shreds and patches; and when we separated neither of us could remember a syllable of it, or had the slightest idea of what it was all about."

All the hopes of the lovers were now centered on the intrigues of the Dowager Electress of Brandenburg. The latter worked incessantly to effect a union between her son and the Princess of Hesse Casel, but without success, because unseconded by Borsdorf. This gentleman, like all his class, was avaricious and corrupt. The highest bidder commanded him. His foible was well known, but her highness of Orange was the only one who, in this instance, made any use of it. The result was that Borsdorf gave his fiat for the Orange alliance. And in meek obedience thereto the Great Elector packed up his portable magnificence and betook him by comfortable stages to the Hague. Mdlle. d'Orange vowed to hate him eternally. Her conduct did not falsify her vow in the slightest particular. She was positively rude to the suitor. The Great Elector, however, was

neither fastidious nor sensitive. He was assured of the consent of everybody else of consequence, and he cared little or nothing for that of the lady. There was no shaking his purpose, no disturbing his solidity, no exciting a spark of generous or even ungenerous warmth in him. His heavy courtship was not to be defeated. It was calculated to sustain the wear and tear of the longest siege, and to exhaust the most obstinate resistance.

The campaign of 1645 opened. Ill at ease, De Tarente took the field with the Prince of Orange. The latter displayed unmistakeable signs of insanity. He made the most astounding movements, and, indeed, showed himself quite incapable of conducting the most trifling operation. Now took place the singular scene described by Marshal Gramont. The Marshal had been explaining his views respecting the projected siege of Antwerp, and the Prince had heard him with great attention to the end. "Then," says De Gramont, "he took my hand and trotted me twice round the room without saying a single word. Coming to a dead halt, he exclaimed, 'My friend, if you would like to dance a 'courante à l'Allemande' with me, now's your time, or never!'" Seeing at once that he had to do with a man beside himself, the Frenchman danced the *courante* to the best of his ability, made his bow, and withdrew. From that day forth the great warrior was nothing but a cypher.

The battle of his feelings had by this time laid De Tarente on a bed of sickness. And when his fever was at its height the Princess of Orange absolutely and literally forced her daughter to the altar.* "The ceremony," remarks the lover, "was a sad one. And it was rendered even more sad by the reluctance of the child than by the malady of the father."

The last hours of that father were at hand, and De Tarente was a witness of them. It was he who, with the boldness of true friendship, first apprised the dying man of his danger. "He took my hand," relates De Tarente, "and wept. I introduced Gontals, a minister of Delft, who was in attendance. The Prince then sent for his daughter, and told her that he died with regret because he had married her against her will. He survived a few hours longer and breathed his last, regretted of all who knew him. His death deprived me of all wish to settle in Holland. I gave Mademoiselle d'Orange the advice of a true friend. I represented that she would render herself the most miserable woman in the world if she lived at variance with her husband. And I showed her that in her new home, surrounded as she would be by strangers, she could have no resource beyond his esteem." The new Electress departed for Brandenburgh not very greatly edified. And a few months afterwards a damsel of Hesse-Casel—she who had aspired to the place now filled by the daughter of Orange—was wedded with magnificent ceremonies to that disconsolate lover, Henri-Charles de la Tremouille, Prince of Tarente.

* Thus, Louise de Coligny, grandmother of the princess, became the ancestress of William I, King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany. The victor of Sedan is the heir of the victim of St. Bartholomew's Eve. Singular!

Story of the *Pébiscite.*

TOLD BY ONE OF THE SEVEN MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND
WHO VOTED "YES."

XII.



ABOUT the end of November there happened an extraordinary thing, of which I must give you an account.

On the first fall of snow, our Landwehr had built on the hill, in the rear of their guns, huts of considerable size, covered with earth, open to the south and closed against the north wind. Under these they lighted great fires, and every hour relieved guard.

They had also received from home immense packages of warm clothing, blankets, cloaks, shirts, and woollen stockings; they called these love-gifts. Captain Floegel distributed these to his men, at his discretion.

Now, it happened that one night, when the Landwehr lodging with us

were on guard, that I, knowing that they would not return before day, had gone down to shut the back door which opens upon the fields. The moon had set, but the snow was shining white, streaked with the dark shadows of the trees; and just as I was going to lock up, what do I see in my orchard behind the large pear-tree on the left? A Turco with his little red cap over his ear, his blue jacket corded all over, his belt and his gaiters. There he was, leaning in the attitude of attention, the butt end of his rifle resting on the ground, his eyes glowing like those of a cat.

He heard the door open, and turned abruptly round.

Then, glad to see one of our own men again, I felt my heart beat, and gazing stealthily round, for fear of the neighbours, I signed to him to draw near.

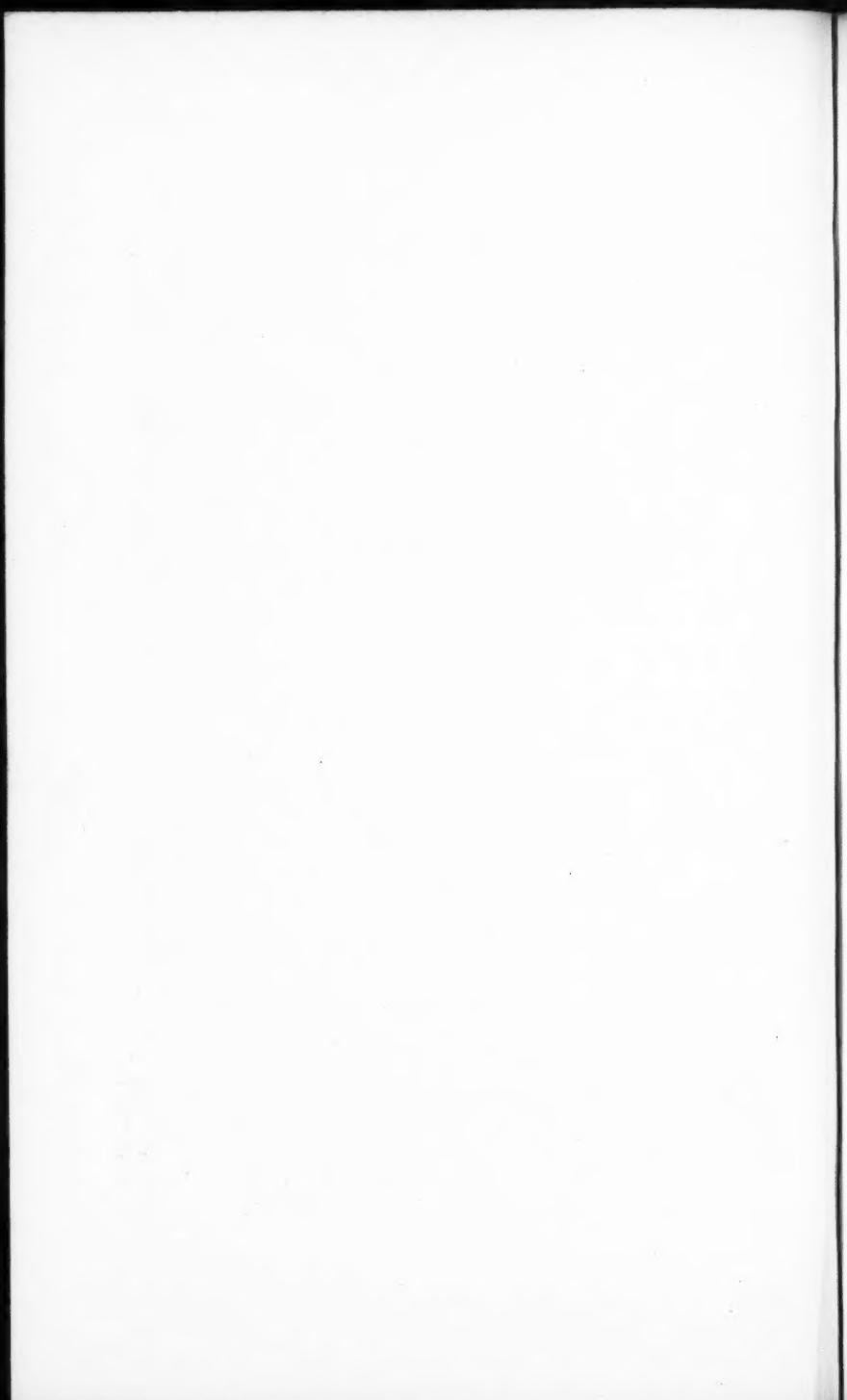
All were asleep in the village; no lights were shining at the windows.

He came down in four or five paces, clearing the fences at a bound, and entered the mill.

Immediately I closed the door again, and said: "Good Frenchman?"



THERE WAS GREDEL IN THE ARMS OF JEAN BAPTISTE WANNER.



He pressed my hand in the dark, and followed me into the back room, where my wife and Grédel were still sitting up.

Imagine their astonishment !

"Here is a man from the town," I said : "he 's a real Turco. We shall hear news."

At the same moment we observed that the Turco's bayonet was red, even to the shank, and that the blood had even run down the barrel of his rifle ; but we said nothing.

This Turco was a fine man, dark brown, with a little curly beard, black eyes and white teeth, just as the apostles are painted. I have never seen a finer man.

He was not sorry to feel the warmth of a good fire. Grédel having made room for him, he took a seat, thanking her with a nod of his head, and repeating : "Good Frenchman !"

I asked him if he was hungry ; he said yes ; and my wife immediately went to fetch him a large basin of soup, which he enjoyed greatly. She gave him also a good slice of bread and of beef ; but instead of eating it, he dropped it into his bag, asking us for salt and tobacco.

He spoke as these people all do—thou-ing us. He even wanted to kiss Grédel's hand. She blushed, and asked him, without any ceremony, before our faces, if he knew Jean Baptiste Werner ?

"Jean Baptiste !" said he. "Bastion No. 3—formerly African gunner. Yes, I know him. Good man ! brave Frenchman !"

"He is not wounded ?"

"No."

"Not ill ?"

"No."

Then Grédel began to cry in her apron ; and mother asked the Turco if he knew Jacob Weber, of the 3rd company of Mobiles ; but the Turco did not know our Jacob ; he could only tell us that the Mobiles had lost very few men, which comforted my wife and me. Then he told us that a captain in the Garde Mobile, a Jew named Cerfber, sent as a flag of truce to Lützelbourg, had taken the opportunity to desert, and that the German general, being disgusted at his baseness, had refused to receive him, upon which the wretch had gone into Germany. I was nowise surprised at this. I knew Cerfber ; he was mayor of Niederwillen, at four leagues from us, and more Bonapartist than Bonaparte himself. Unable to surrender the rest, as his master had done at Sedan, he had surrendered himself.

Grédel had gone out while the Turco was telling us these news ; she returned presently with a large quantity of provisions. She had taken all my tobacco, and begged the Turco to take it to Jean Baptiste and Jacob. She had not quite the face to say before me that it was for Jean Baptiste alone ; that would have been going a little too far ; but she said, "It is for the two." The Turco promised to perform this commission ; then Grédel gave him several things for himself ; but he wanted especially salt, and fortunately we possessed enough to fill his bag. My wife stood

sentinel in the passage. Thank God there was no stir for a whole hour ; during which this Turco answered as well as he was able all the questions we asked him.

We understood that there was much sickness in the town ; that several articles of consumption were utterly exhausted, amongst others, meat, salt, and tobacco ; and that the inhabitants were weary of being shut in without any news from outside.

About one in the morning, the wind, having arisen, was shaking the door, and we fancied we could hear the Landwehr returning. The Turco noticed it, and made signs to us that he would go.

We could have wished to detain him, but the danger was too great. He therefore took up his rifle again, and asked to kiss my wife's hand, just as the gipsies do in our country. Then pointing to his bag, he said : "For Jacob and Jean Baptiste ! "

I took him back through the orchard. The weather was frightful ; the air was full of snow, whirled into drifts by a stormy wind ; but he knew his way, and began by running with his body bending low as far as the tall hedge on the left ; a moment after he was out of sight. I listened a long while. The watchfires of the Landwehr were shining on the hill, above Wéchem ; their sentinels were challenging and answering each other in the darkness ; but not a shot was fired.

I returned. My wife and Grédel seemed happy ; and we all went to bed.

Next day we learnt that two Landwehr had been found killed—one near the Avenue des Dames, between the town and the Quatre Vents, the other at the end of Fiquet, both fathers of families. The unfortunate men had been surprised at their posts.

What a miserable thing is war ! The Germans have lost more men than we have ; but we will not be so cruel as to rejoice over this.

And now, if I am asked my opinion about the Turcos, against whom the Germans have raised such an outcry, I answer that they are good men and true ! Jacob and Jean Baptiste have received everything that we sent to them. This Turco's word was worth more than that of the lieutenant and the feldweibel who had promised to pay me for my wine.

No doubt, amongst the Turcos there are some bad fellows ; but the greater part are honest men, with a strong feeling of religion : men who have known them at Phalsbourg and elsewhere acknowledge them to be men of honour. They have stolen nothing, robbed nobody, never insulted a woman. If they had campaigned on the other side of the Rhine, of course they would have twisted the necks of ducks and hens, as all soldiers do in an enemy's country : the Landwehr put no constraint upon themselves in our country. But the idea would never have occurred to the Turcos, as it had to German officers and generals, of sending for packs of Jews to follow them and buy up wholesale the linen, furniture, clocks—in a word, anything they found in private individuals' houses. This is simple truth ! Monsieur de Bismarck may insult the Turcos as much as he pleases before his German parliament, which is ready to say

"Amen" every time he opens his mouth. He might as well not talk at all. Thieves are bad judges of common honesty ! I am aware that Monsieur le Prince de Bismarck thinks himself the first politician in the world, because he has deceived a simpleton ; but there is a wide difference between a great man and a great dishonest man. By-and-by this will be manifest, to the great misfortune of Europe.

But it was a real comfort to have seen this Turco ; and for several days, when we were alone, my wife and Grédel talked of nothing else ; but sad reflections again got the upper hand.

No one can form an idea of the misery, the feeling of desolation which takes possession of you, when days and weeks pass by in the midst of enemies without the least word reaching you from the interior ; then you feel the strength of the hold that your native land has upon you. The Germans think to detach us from it by preventing us from learning what is taking place there ; but they are mistaken. The less you speak the more you think ; and your indignation, your disgust, your hatred for violence, force, and injustice is ever on the increase. You conceive a horror for those who have been the cause of such sufferings. Time brings no change ; on the contrary, it deepens the wound : one curse succeeds another ; and the deepest desire left is either for an end of all, or vengeance.

Besides, it is perfectly evident the Lorrainers and the Alsacians are a bold, brave nation ; and all the fine words in the world will not make them forget the treatment they have suffered, after being surprised defenceless. They would reproach themselves as cowards, did they cease to hope for their revenge. I, Christian Weber, declare this, and no honest man can blame me for it. Abject wretches alone accept injustice as a final dispensation ; and we have ever God over us all, who forbids us to believe that murder, fire, and robbery may and ought to prevail over right and conscience.

Let us return to our story.

Cousin George had seen in the Englishman's newspapers that the circulation of the *Independence Belge* and the *Journal de Genève* had doubled and trebled since the commencement of the war, because they filled the place of all the other journals which used to be received from Paris ; and without loss of time he had written to Brussels to subscribe.

The first week, having received no answer, he had sent the money in Prussian notes in a second letter ; for we had at that time only Prussian thalers in paper, with which the Landwehr paid us for whatever they did not take by force. We had no great confidence in this paper, but it was worth the trial.

The newspaper arrived. It was the first we had seen for four months, and any one may understand the joy with which George came to tell me this good news.

Every evening from that time I went to hear the newspapers read at Cousin George's. We could hardly understand anything at first, for at every line we met with new names. Chanzy had the chief command upon the

Loire, Faidherbe in the north. And these two men, without any soldiers besides Mobiles and volunteers, held the open country. They even gained considerable advantages over an enemy that far outnumbered them; whilst the marshals of the empire had suffered themselves to be vanquished and annihilated in three weeks, with our best troops.

This shows that, in victories, generals should have no more than half the credit.

Of all the old generals, Bourbaki was the only one left.

As for Garibaldi, we knew him, and we could tell by the restless movements of our Landwehr that he was approaching our mountains about Belfort. He was the hope of our country: all our young men were going to join him.

We also learned that the Government was divided between Tours and Paris; that Gambetta was bearing all the burden of the defence of the country, as Minister of War; that he was everywhere at once, to encourage the dispirited; that he had set up the chief place of instruction for our young soldiers at Toulouse, and that the Prussians were pursuing their horrible course in the invaded countries with renewed fury; that a party of francs-tireurs having surprised a few Uhlans at Nemours, a column of Germans had surrounded the town on the next day, and set fire to it to the music of their bands, compelling the members of the committee for the defence to be present at this abominable act; that M. de Bismarck had laid hands upon certain bourgeois of the interior, in reprisal for the captures made by our ships five hundred leagues away in the North Sea; that Ricciotti Garibaldi, having defeated the Prussians at Chatillon-sur-Seine, those atrocious wretches had delivered the innocent town over to plunder, and laid it under contribution for a million of francs; that respectable persons belonging to the Grand Duchy of Baden, private individuals, were crossing the Rhine with horses and carts to come and pillage Alsace with impunity,—all the towns and villages being occupied by their troops. In a word, many other things of the kind; which plainly prove that with the Prussians, war is an honest means of growing rich, and getting possession of the inoffensive inhabitants.

At St. Quentin, one of their chiefs, the Colonel de Kahlden, gave public notice to the inhabitants, that "if a shot was fired upon a German soldier, *six inhabitants should be shot*; and that every individual compromised or suspected would be punished with death."

Everywhere, everywhere these great philosophers plundered and burned without mercy whatever towns or villages dared resist!

George said that these beings were not raised above the beasts of prey, and that education only does for them what spiked collars do for fighting dogs.

We also heard of the capitulation of Thionville, after a terrible bombardment, in which the Prussians had refused to allow the women and children to leave the place! We heard of the first encounters of Faidherbe in the north with Manteuffel; and the battles of Chanzy with Frederick Charles, near Orleans.

In spite of the inferiority of our numbers, and the inexperience of our troops, we often got the upper hand.

These news had restored us to hope. Unhappily, the heaviest blow of all was to come. Phalsbourg, utterly exhausted by famine, was about to surrender, after a resistance of five months.

Oh! my ancient town of Phalsbourg, what affliction sank into our hearts, when, on the evening of the 9th December, we heard your heavy guns fire one after another, as if for a last appeal to France to come to your rescue! Oh, what were then our sufferings, and what tears we shed!

"Now," said George, "it is all over! They are calling aloud to France, our beloved France, unable to come! It is like a ship in distress, by night, in the open sea, firing her guns for assistance, and no one hears; she must sink in the deep."

Ah! my old town of Phalsbourg, where we used to go to market; where we used to see our own soldiers—our red-trousered soldiery, our merry Frenchmen! We shall never more see behind our ramparts any but heavy Germans and rough Prussians! And so it is over! The earth bears no longer the same children; and men whom we never knew tell us, "You are in our custody: we are your masters!"

Can it be possible? No! ancient fortress of Vauban, you shall be French again: "nursery of brave men," as the first Bonaparte called you. Let our sons come to manhood, and they shall drive from thy walls these lumpish fellows who dare to talk of Germanising you!

But how our hearts bled on that day! Every one went to hide himself as far back in his house as he could, murmuring, "Oh! my poor Phalsbourg, we cannot help thee; but if our life could deliver thee, we would give it."

Yes! I have lived to behold this, and it is the most terrible sensation I have ever experienced: the thought of meeting Jacob again was no comfort; Grédel herself was listening with pale cheeks, and counting the reports from second to second; and then the tears fell and she cried: "It is over!"

Next day, all the roads were covered with German and Prussian officers galloping rapidly to the *place*; the report ran that the entry would take place the same evening; every one was preparing a small stock of provisions for his son, his relations, his friends, whom he dreaded never more to see alive.

On the morning of the 11th December, leave was given to start for the town; the sentinels posted at Wéchem had orders to allow foot-passengers to pass.

Phalsbourg, with its fifteen hundred Mobiles and its sixty gunners, disdained to capitulate; it surrendered no rifles, no guns, no military stores, no eagles, as Bazaine had done at Metz! The Commander Taillant had not said to his men: "Let us, above all, for the reputation of our army, avoid all acts of indiscipline, such as the destruction of arms and material of war; since, according to military usage, strong places and arms will return to France when peace is signed." No! quite the contrary; he

had ordered the destruction of whatever might prove useful to the enemy: to drown the gunpowder, smash rifles, spike the guns, burn up the bedding in the casemates; and when all this was done, he had sent a message to the German general: "We have nothing left to eat! To-morrow I will open the gates! Do what you please with me!"

Here was a man, indeed!

And the Germans ran, some laughing, others astonished, gazing at the walls which they had won without a fight: for they have taken almost every place without fighting; they have shelled the poor inhabitants instead of storming the walls; they have starved the people. They may boast of having burnt more towns and villages, and killed more women and children in this one campaign, than all the other nations in all the wars of Europe since the Revolution.

But, to be sure, they were a religious people, much attached to the doctrines of the Gospel, and who sing hymns with much feeling. Their Emperor especially, after every successive bombardment, and every massacre—whilst women, children, and old men are weeping around their houses destroyed by the enemy's shells, and from the battle-fields strewn with heaps of dead, are rising the groans and cries of thousands and thousands of sufferers whose lives are crushed, whose flesh is torn, whose bodies are rent and bleeding!—their Emperor, the venerable man, he lifts his blood-stained hands to heaven and thanks God for having permitted him to commit these abominable deeds! Does he look upon God as his accomplice in crime?

Barbarian! one day thou shalt know that in the sight of the Eternal, hypocrisy is an aggravation of crime.

On the 11th December, then, early in the morning, my wife, Grédel, Cousin George, Marie Anne and myself, having locked up our houses, started, each carrying a little parcel under our arms, to go and embrace our children and our friends if they yet survived.

The snow was melting, a thick fog was covering the face of the country, and we walked along in single file and in silence, gazing intently upon the German batteries which we saw for the first time, in front of Wéchem, by Gerbershoff farm, and at the *arbre vert*.

Such desolation! Everything was cut down around the town: no more summer-arbours, no more gardens or orchards, only the vast naked surface of snow-covered ground, with its hollows all bare; the bullet marks on the ramparts, the embrasures all destroyed.

A great crowd of other village people preceded and followed us; poor old men, women and a few children; they were walking straight on without paying any attention to each other; all thought of the fate of those they loved, which they would learn within an hour.

Thus we arrived at the gate of France; it stood open and unguarded. The moment we entered, the ruins were seen: houses tottering, streets demolished, here a window left alone, there up in the air a chimney scarcely supported; further on some door-steps and no door. In every direction the bombshells had left their tracks.

God of heaven ! did we indeed behold such devastation ? we did in truth. We all saw it : it was no dream !

The cold was piercing. The townspeople, haggard and pale, stared at us arriving ; recognitions took place, men and women approached and took each other by the hand.

“ Well ? ” “ Well,” was the reply in a hollow whisper, in the midst of the street encumbered with blackened beams of wood. “ Have you suffered much ? ” “ Ah ! yes.”

This was enough : no need for another word ; and then we would proceed further. At every street corner a new scene of horror began.

Catherine and I were seeking Jacob ; no doubt Grédel was looking for Jean-Baptiste.

We saw our poor Mobiles passing by, scarcely recognizable after those five months. All through the fearful cold these unhappy men had had nothing on but their summer blouses and linen trousers. Many of them might have escaped and gained their villages, for the gates had stood open since the evening before ; but not a man thought of doing so : it was not supposed that Mobiles would be treated like regular soldiers.

On the *place*, in front of the fallen church filled with its own ruins, we heard, for the first time, that the garrison were prisoners of war.

The cafés Vacheron, Meyer, and Hoffmann, riddled with balls, were swarming with officers.

We were gazing, not knowing whom to ask after Jacob, when a cry behind us made us turn round ; and there was Grédel in the arms of Jean Baptiste Werner ! Then I kept silence ; my wife also. Since she would have it so, well, so let it be ; this matter concerned her much more than it did us.

Jean Baptiste, after the first moment, looked embarrassed at seeing us ; he approached us with a pale face, and as we spoke not a word to him, George shook him by the hand, and cried : “ Jean Baptiste, I know that you have behaved well during this siege ; we have learnt it all with pleasure ; didn’t we, Christian ? didn’t we, Catherine ? ”

What answer could we make ? I said “ yes ”—and mother, with tears in her eyes, cried : “ Jean Baptiste, is Jacob not wounded ? ”

“ No, Madame Weber ; we have always been very comfortable together. There is nothing the matter. I’ll fetch him : only come in somewhere.”

“ We are going to the Café Hoffmann,” said she. “ Try to find him, Jean Baptiste.” And as he was turning in the direction of the Mayoralty house :

“ There,” said he, “ there he is coming round the corner by the chemist Rêbe’s shop.” And we began to cry “ Jacob ! ”

And our lad ran, crossing the *place*.

A minute after, we were in each other’s arms.

He had on a coarse soldier’s cloak, with canvas trousers ; his cheeks were hollow ; he stared at us, and stammered : “ Oh, is it you ? You are not all dead ? ”

He looked stupefied ; and his mother, holding him, murmured : " It is he ! "

She would not relinquish her hold upon him, and wiped her eyes with her apron.

Grédel and Jean Baptiste followed arm in arm, with George and Marie Anne. We entered the Café Hoffmann together ; we sat round a table in the room at the left, and George ordered some coffee, for we all felt the need of a little warmth.

None of us wished to speak ; we were downcast, and held each other by the hand, gazing in each other's faces.

The young officers of the Mobiles were talking together in the next room ; we could hear them saying that not one would sign the engagement not to serve again during the campaign ; that they would all go as prisoners of war, and that they would accept no other lot than that of their men.

This idea of seeing our poor Jacob go off as a prisoner of war, almost broke our hearts, and my wife began to sob bitterly, with her head upon the table.

Jacob would have wished to come back to the mill along with us ; I could see this by his countenance ; but he was not an officer, and his parole was not asked for. And in spite of all, hearing those spirited young men, who were sacrificing their liberty to discharge a duty, I should myself, have said, " No : a man must be a man ! "

Werner was talking with my cousin : they spoke in whispers ; having, no doubt, secret matters to discuss. I saw George slip something into his hand. What could it be ? I cannot say ; but all at once Jean Baptiste rising from his seat and kissing Grédel without any ceremony before our faces, said that he was on service ; that he would not see us again very soon, as after the muster, their march would begin, so that we should have to say good-by at once.

He held out both his hands to my wife and then to Marie Anne, after which he went out with George and Grédel, leaving us much astonished.

Jacob and Marie Anne remained with us ; in a couple of minutes Grédel and my cousin returned ; Grédel, whose eyes were red, sat by the side of Marie Anne without speaking, and we saw that her basket of provisions was gone.

The stir upon the *place* became greater and greater. The drums beat the assembly, the officers of the Mobiles were coming out. I then thought I would ask Jacob what had become of Mathias Heitz ; he told us that that wretched coward had been trembling with fright the whole time of the siege, and that at last he had fallen ill of fear. Grédel did not turn her head to listen : she would have nothing to do with him ! And, in truth, on hearing this, I felt I should prefer giving our daughter to our ragman's son than to this fellow Mathias !

The review was then commencing under the tall trees on the *place*, and Jacob appeared like his comrades. No sadder spectacle will ever be seen

than that of our poor lads, about half a hundred Turcos and a few Zouaves, the remnants of Froeschwiller, all haggard and pale, and their clothes falling to pieces. They were unarmed, having destroyed their arms before opening the gates.

Presently Jacob ran to us, crying that they were ordered to their barracks, and that they would have to start next day before twelve.

Then his eyes filled with tears. His mother and I handed him our parcels, in which we had enclosed three good linen shirts, a pair of shoes almost new, woollen stockings, and a strong pair of trousers.

I was wearing upon my shoulders my travelling cape; I placed it upon his. Then I slipped into his pocket a small roll of thalers, and George gave him two louis. After this, the tears and lamentations of the women recommenced; we were obliged to promise to return on the morrow.

The garrison was defiling down the street; Jacob ran to fall in, and disappeared with the rest, near the barracks.

As for Jean Baptiste Werner, we saw him no more.

The German officers were coming and going up and down the town to distribute their troops amongst the townspeople. It was twelve o'clock, and we returned to our village, sadder and more distressed than ever.

And now we knew that Jacob was safe; but we knew also that he was going to be carried, we could not tell where, to the farthest depths of Germany.

My wife arrived home quite ill; the damp weather, her anxiety, her anguish of mind, had cast her down utterly. She went to bed with a shivering fit, and could not return next day to town, nor Grédel, who was taking care of her, so I went alone.

Orders had come to take the prisoners to Lützelbourg. On reaching the square, near the chemist Rèbe's shop, I saw them all in their ranks, moving by twos down the road. The inhabitants had closed their shutters, not to witness this humiliation; for Hessian soldiers, with arms shouldered, were escorting them; our poor boys were advancing between them, their heads hanging sorrowfully down.

I stopped at the chemist's corner, and waited, being unable to discern Jacob in the midst of that crowd. All at once I recognised him, and I cried, "Jacob!" He was going to throw himself into my arms; but the Hessians repulsed me. We both burst into tears, and I went on walking by the side of the escort, crying: "Courage! . . . Write to us. . . . Your mother is not quite well. . . . She could not come. . . . It is not much!"

He answered nothing; and many others who were there had their friends and relations before or behind them.

We wanted to accompany them to Lützelbourg; unhappily, at the gate the Prussians had posted sentinels, who stopped us, pointing their bayonets at us. They did not even allow us to press our children's hands.

On all sides were cries: "Adieu, Jean!" "Adieu, Pierre!" and they replied: "Adieu! farewell, father!" "Adieu! farewell, mother!" and then the sighs, the sobs, the tears. . . .

Ah! the Plébiscite, the Plébiscite!

I was compelled to stay there an hour; at last they allowed me to pass. I resumed my way home, my heart rent with anguish. I could see, hear nothing but the cry, "Adieu! Adieu!" of all that crowd; and I thought that men were made to make each other miserable; that it was a pity we were ever born; that for a few days' happiness acquired by long and painful toil, we had years of endless misery; and that the people of the earth through their folly, their idleness, their wickedness, their trust in consummate rogues, deserved what they got.

Yes, I could have wished for another deluge: I should have cared less to see the waters rise from the ends of Alsace, and cover our mountains, than to be bound under the yoke of the Germans.

In this mood I reached home.

I took care not to tell my wife all that had happened; on the contrary, I told her that I had embraced Jacob in my arms for her and for us all; that he was full of spirits, and that he would soon write to us.

XIII.

We were now rid of our Landwehr, who were garrisoned at Phalsbourg, but a part of whom were sent off into the interior. They were indignant, and declared that if they had known that they were to be sent farther, the blockade would have lasted longer; that they would have let the cows, the bullocks and the bread find their way in, many a time, in spite of their chiefs; and that it was infamous to expose them to new dangers when every man had done his part in the campaign.

There was no enthusiasm in them; but, all the same, they walked in step in their ranks, and were moved some on Belfort, some on Paris.

We learned, through the German newspapers, that they had severer sufferings to endure round Belfort than with us; that the garrison made sorties, and drove them several leagues away; that their dead bodies were rotting in mounds, behind the hedges, covered with snow and mud; that the commander Denfert gave them many a heavy dig in the ribs; and every day people coming from Alsace told us that such an one of the poor fellows whom we had known had just been struck down by a ball, maimed by a splinter of a shell, or bayoneted by our Mobiles. We could not help pitying them, for they all had five or six children each, of whom they were for ever talking; and naturally, for when the parent-bird dies the brood is lost.

And all this for the honour and glory of the King of Prussia, of Bismarck, of Moltke, and a few heroes of the same stamp, not one of whom has had a scratch in the chances of war.

How can one help shrugging one's shoulders and laughing inwardly at seeing these Germans, with all their education, greater fools than ourselves? They have won! That is to say, the survivors, for those who are buried, and who have lost their limbs, have no great gain to boast of, and can hardly rejoice over the success of the enterprise. They have gained

—what? The hatred of people who loved them; they have gained that they will be obliged to fight every time that their lords and masters give the order; they have gained that they can say Alsace and Lorraine are German, which is absolutely no gain whatever; and besides this, they have gained the envy of a vast number of people, and the distrust of a vast many more, who will end by agreeing together to fall upon them in a body, and treat them to fire and slaughter and bombardment, of which they have set the example.

This is what the peasants, the artisans and the bourgeois have gained: as for the chiefs they have won some a title, some a pension or an épaulette; others have the satisfaction of saying, "I am the great So-and-So! I am William, Emperor of Germany; a crown was set on my head at Versailles, whilst thousands of my subjects were biting the dust!"

Alas! notwithstanding all this, these people will die, and in a hundred years will be recognized as barbarians; their names will be inscribed on the roll of the plagues of the human race, and there they will remain to the end of time.

But what is the use of reasoning with such philosophers as these? In time they will acknowledge the truth of what I say!

Now to our story again.

They were fighting furiously round Belfort; our men did not drop off asleep in casemates; they occupied posts at a distance all round the place: their sortie from Boureigne and their slaughter of the Bavarians at Haute-Perche were making a noise in Alsace.

We learnt from the *Indépendance* the battles of Chanzy at Vendôme against the army of Mecklenburg; the fight by General Crémier at Nuits against the army of Von Werder; the retreat of Manteuffel towards Amiens, after having overwhelmed Rouen with forced contributions; the bayonet attack upon the villages around Pont-Noyelles, in which Faidherbe had defeated the enemy; and especially the grand measure of Gambetta, who had at last dissolved the Councils General named by the Prefects of the Empire, and replaced them by really Republican departmental commissions.

Cousin George highly approved of this step. This was of more importance in his eyes than the decrees of our Prussian Préfet Henckel de Bonnermark; though he had inflicted heavy fines upon the fathers and mothers of the young men who had left home to join the French armies, and who had laid Lorraine, already ruined by the invasion, under a contribution of 700,000 livres to compensate the losses suffered by the German mercantile marine; plundering decrees which went nigh to tearing the bread out of our mouths.

Then George passed on to the campaign of Chanzy; for what could be grander than this struggle of a young, inexperienced army, scarcely organized, against forces double their number, commanded by the great Prussian general who had been victorious at Woerth, Sedan and Metz, over the whole of the Imperial troops?

George especially admired the noble protest of Chanzy, proclaiming to

the world the ferocity of the Germans, and pointing out with pride the falsehoods of their generals, who invariably claimed the victory.

“The Commander-in-Chief lays before the army the subjoined protest, which he transmits, under a flag of truce, to the commander of the Prussian troops at Vendôme, with the assurance that his indignation will be shared by all, as well as his desire to take signal revenge for such insults.

“To the Prussian commander at Vendôme :

“I am informed that unjustifiable acts of violence have been committed by troops under your orders upon the unoffending inhabitants of St. Calais. In spite of our humane treatment of your sick and wounded, your officers have exacted money and commanded pillage. Such conduct is an abuse of power, which will weigh heavily upon your consciences, and which the patriotism of our people will enable them to endure ; but what I cannot permit is, that you should add to their injuries insults which you know full well to be entirely gratuitous.

“You have asserted that we were defeated ; that assertion is false. We have beaten you and held you in check since the 4th of this month. You have presumed to attach the name of coward to men who are prevented from answering you ; pretending that they were coerced by the Government of National Defence, which, as you said, compelled them to resist when they wanted peace, and you were offering it. I deny this : I deny it by the right given me by the resistance of entire France and this army which confronts you, and which you have been hitherto unable to vanquish. This communication reaffirms what our resistance ought already to have taught you. Whatever may be the sacrifices still left us to endure, we will struggle to the very end, without truce or pity ; since now we are resisting the attacks not of loyal and honourable enemies but of devastating bands who aim solely at the ruin and disgrace of a nation, which itself is striving to maintain its honour, rank, and independence. To the generous treatment we have accorded to your prisoners and wounded, your reply is insolence, fire, and plunder. I therefore protest, with deep indignation, in the name of humanity and the rights of men, which you trample under foot.

“The present order will be read before the troops at their consecutive muster-calls.

“*CHANZY, Commander-in-Chief.*

“*Head Quarters, Le Mans, 26th December, 1870.*”

These are the words of an honourable man and a patriot, words to make a man lift up his head.

And as Manteuffel, whose only merit consists in having been during his youth the boon companion of the pious William ; as this old courtier followed the same system as Frederic Charles and Mecklenburg, of lowering us to raise themselves, and to get their successes cheap ; General Faidherbe also obliged him to abate his pride after the affair of Pont-Noyelles.

“The French army have left in the hands of the enemy only a few

sailors, surprised in the village of Daours. It has kept its positions, and has waited in vain for the enemy until two o'clock in the afternoon of the next day."

This was plain speaking, and it was clear on which side good faith was to be looked for.

Then, after having opposed a million of men to 300,000 conscripts, these Germans were even now obliged to lie in order not to discourage their armies.

Of course they could not but prevail in the end : France had had no time to prepare anew, to arm, and to recover herself after this disgraceful capitulation of the *honest man* and his friend Bazaïne ; but still she resisted with terrible energy, and the Prussians at last became anxious for peace too, and wished for it, perhaps, even more than ourselves.

The proof of this is the numberless petitions of the Germans entreating King William to bombard Paris.

Humane Germans, fathers of families, pious men, seated quietly by their counters at Hamburg, Cologne, or Berlin, in every town and village of Germany, eating and drinking heartily, warming their fat legs before the fire during this winter of unexampled severity, cried to their king at Christmas time to bombard Paris, and set fire to the houses—to kill and burn fathers and mothers of families like themselves, but reduced to famine in their own dwellings !

Have any but the Germans ever done the like ?

We too have besieged German towns, but never have petitions like this been sent up under the Republic, or under the Empire, to ask our soldiers to do more injury than war between brave men requires. And since that period we have never uselessly shelled houses inhabited by inoffensive persons ; and even when we have had to bombard walled towns, warning was given, as at Odessa and everywhere else, to give helpless people time to depart for the interior, if they did not want to run the risk of meeting with stray bullets ; and permission was given to old men, women, and children to come out—a privilege never granted by the Prussians.

Ah ! the French may not be so pious, so learned, and so good as the *good German people*, but they have better hearts and feelings of compassion ; they have less of the Gospel upon their lips, but they have it in the bottoms of their souls. They are not hypocrites, and therefore we Alsacians and Lorrainers had rather remain French than belong to the *good German people* and be like them.

Indignities without a precedent have been committed by them : " Shell—bombard—burn, in the name of heaven ! Set fire everywhere with petroleum bombs !—You are too gracious a king !—Your scruples betray too much weakness for this Babylon : Bombard quick : Bombardments have succeeded better than anything else. Sire, your good and faithful people entreat you to bombard everything—leave nothing standing ! "

" Oh ! scoundrels !—rascals !—if you have so often played the saint for fifty years ; if you have talked so edifyingly about friendship, brotherhood and the allegiance of nations, it was because you did not then think

yourselves the strongest ; now that you think you are, you piously bombard women, old men and children, in the name of the Saviour ! Faugh ! it is simply disgusting ! ”

Every time that Cousin George read these assassins' petitions, he would spring off his chair and cry : “ Now I know what to think of fanatics of every religion. These men have no need to play the hypocrite : their religion does not oblige them to it. Well, they play the Jesuit through the love of it, better than we do by profession. May they be execrated and despised perpetually ! ”

Then he dilated with much warmth of feeling upon the kind reception which the Parisians, in former days, used to accord to the Germans, for forty years and more. Men who came to seek a livelihood among us, without a penny, lean, humble, half-clad, with a little bundle of old rags under their arms, asking for credit, even in George's and Marie Anne's little inn, for a basin of broth, a bit of meat, and a glass of wine, were kindly received : they were cheered up, situations found for them : everybody was anxious to put them in the right way, to explain to them what they did not know. Soon they grew fat and flourishing, and gained assurance ; by servility they would win the confidence of the head-clerk, who showed them all about the business ; and then some fine morning it was noised about that the head-clerk was discharged and the German was in his place. He had had a private interview with the head partner, he had proposed to do his work for half the salary. Of course the partners are always glad to have good workmen, humble and obsequious, and, above all, cheap.

George had witnessed this fifty times. But people did not get angry ; they would say, “ The poor fellow must earn a living somehow. The other is a Frenchman : he will very soon secure another place.”

And it was thus that the Germans slipped quietly into the shoes of those who had received them kindly and taught them their trade.

A few old clerks got angry ; but they were always held to be in the wrong. “ *That good German* ” was justified ! He had not meddled ; everything had gone on simply and naturally.

And twenty, thirty, fifty thousand Germans used thus to come and prosper in Paris ; and then they would get a holiday to take a turn home and exhibit the flesh and fat they had gained, and their gold trinkets.

If they happened to be professors of languages or newspaper correspondents, they were sure to break out down there against the corruption of manners in this “ Modern Babylon.” Great hulking fellows they were, with long hooded cloaks, and gold or silver spectacles, who had scandalized even their doorkeepers by bringing home night after night “ princesses ” of Mabile and elsewhere, singing, drinking like a sponge, shaking all the house and preventing people from sleeping ; bringing, besides, other colleagues of the same stamp, and leading disgraceful lives !

But it is the fashion in Germany to cry out against “ Modern Babylon.” It flatters the secret envy of the Germans, and establishes the character of

the speaker for seriousness, gravity, and influence ; as a man worthy of every consideration, and who may hope—if his situation in Paris is permanent—for the hand of “Herr Rector’s” or “Herr Doctor’s” fair daughter : for in that country they are all doctors in something or other. He had gone off as cold and comfortless as the stones in the street ; he would have become a schoolmaster, or a small clerk at a couple of hundred thalers all his life, in old Germany. He weighed heavily upon his poor father, encumbered with a dozen children ; he has grown fat, well-feathered, and well-trained in Paris ; and there he is now virtuously indignant against our own townswomen : against the degenerate race which has given him his daily bread, and pulled him out of the mire, instead of kicking him downstairs.

This German fellow used to be republican, socialist, communist, &c. He had fled from Cologne, or elsewhere, in consequence of the events of 1848. Nothing in our opinion was sufficiently strong, decided, or advanced for him. He spouted about his sacrifices for the universal Republic, his terrible campaign in the Duchy of Baden against the Prussians, the loss of his place, of his property. We thought, what sufferings he has endured ! Surely, the Germans are the first Democrats in the world !

But now this very same gentleman is the most faithful servant of his Majesty William, King of Prussia, Emperor of Germany. No doubt he talks at Berlin of the sacrifices which he has made to the noble cause of Germany, the battles he has fought in the public-houses amongst the broken bottles of beer, which he has been swallowing by the dozen, to reclaim old Alsace, where lie deep the roots of the Germanic tongue. He abounds in indignation against the “Modern Babylon ;” his name stands the head of the earliest petitions that Babylon should be burned, till nothing but ashes were left : that that race of madmen should be exterminated ; and as during his residence in France he has rendered police services to Bismarck, he is pretty sure to obtain a post in Alsace-Lorraine, where all these old German spies are swooping down to Germanize us.

Thus spoke George, in his indignation ; and Marie Anne, after listening to him, said : “Ah, it is too true ! Those men did deceive us ; and they did not even pay their debts. Some fine morning, when their bill had run up, three-fourths of them would make a start, and they were never heard of again. I have never had any confidence in any of them, except the crossing-sweepers and the shoe-blacks : one knew where to find them ; but as for the professors, the newspaper-correspondents, the inventors, the book-worms—they have done us too many bad turns ; and they were too overbearing. They were filled with hatred and envy of our nation.”

Since the departure of the Landwehr, we were able to speak more freely : those sulky eavesdroppers were no longer spying upon us, and we felt the relief.

Paris, as we saw in the *Indépendance*, was making sorties. The Gardes Mobiles and the National Guards were being drilled and becoming

better skilled in the use of arms. Our sailors, in the forts, were admirable. But the Germans grew stronger from day to day; they had brought such enormous guns—called Krupps—that the railways were unable to bear them, the tunnels were not high enough to give them passage, and the bridges gave way under their ponderous mass. This proves that if the bombardment had not yet commenced, in spite of the innumerable petitions of the good Germans, it was not for want of will on the part of his Majesty King William, Monsieurs Moltke, Bismarck, and all those good men. Oh, no! our forts and our sorties hampered them a good deal in gaining their positions!

At last, about the end of December, “by the grace of God,” as the Emperor William said, they began by bombarding a few forts, and were soon enabled to reach houses, hospitals, churches, and museums.

George and Marie Anne knew all these places by name, and these ferocious acts drew from them cries of horror. I, my wife, and Grédel could not understand these accounts: having never been in Paris, and we could not form an idea of it.

The German newswriters knew them, however; for daily they told us how great a misfortune it was to be obliged to shell such rich libraries, such beautiful galleries of pictures, such magnificent monuments, and gardens so richly stocked with plants and rare collections; that it made their hearts bleed; they professed themselves inconsolable at being driven to an extremity by the evil dispositions of those who presumed to defend their property, their homes, their wives, their children, contrary to every principle of justice. They pitied the French for their want of common sense; they said that their brains were addled; that they were in their dotage, and uttered similar absurdities.

But every time that they lost men, their fury rose: “the Germans are a sacred race! Kill Germans! a superior race! it is a high crime. The French, the Swiss, the Danes, the Dutch, Belgians, Poles, Hungarians, even the Russians, are destined to be successively devoured by the Germans.” I have heard this with my own ears! Yes, the Russians too, they cannot dispense with the Germans; their manufactures, their trade, their sciences come to them from Germany; they too belong to an inferior race. The renowned Gortschakoff is unworthy to dust the boots of Monsieur Bismarck, and the Emperor of Russia is most fortunate in being allied by marriage to the Emperor William: it is a glorious prerogative for him!

The Captain, Floegel, used often to repeat these things; and besides, the Germans all say the same at this time; you have had to listen to them: they are too strong now to need to hide their ambition. They think they are conferring a great honour upon us Alsacians and Lorrainers in acknowledging us as cousins, and gathering us to themselves out of love. We were a superior race in “that degenerate France;” but we are about to become little boys again amongst the noble German people. We are the last new comers into Germany, and shall require time to acquire the noble German virtues: to become hypocrites, spies, bombarders,

plunderers ; to learn to receive slaps and kicks without winking. But what would you have ? You cannot regenerate a people in a day.

The Prussians had announced that Paris would surrender after an eight days' bombardment ; but as the Parisians held out ; as there were passing by Saverne innumerable convoys of wounded, scorched, maimed and sick by thousands ; as General Faidherbe had gained a victory in the North, the victory of Bapaume, in which we had driven the Prussians from the field of battle all covered with their dead, and in which the enemy had left in our hands not only all their wounded, but a great number of prisoners ; as the inhabitants of Paris had only one fault to find with General Trochu, that he did not lead them out to the great battle, and they were raising the cry of "victory or death ;" since Chanzy, repulsed at Le Mans, was falling back in good order, while in the midst of the deep snows of January and the severest cold, Bourbaki was still advancing upon Belfort and Garibaldi with his frances-tireurs was not losing courage ; since the Germans were suffering from exhaustion ; and it takes but an hour, a minute, to turn all the chances against one ; as, if Faidherbe had gained his victory nearer to Paris, a great sortie would have ensued, which might have entirely changed the face of things —for these and other reasons, I suppose, all at once there was much talk of humanity, mildness, peace ; of the convocation of an assembly at Bordeaux, when the true representatives of the nation might settle everything, and restore order to our unhappy France.

As soon as these rumours began to spread, George said that Alsace and German Lorraine were to be sacrificed ; that our egotists had come to an understanding with the Germans ; that all our defeats had been unable to cast us down, and the Prussians were better pleased than ourselves to come to an end of it, for they needed peace, having no reserves left to throw into the scale ; that Gambetta's enthusiasm and courage might all at once win the most timid, and that then the Germans would be lost, because a people will rise in a body, and at the same time possesses arms and munitions of war in a third of our provinces, such a nation in the long run would crush all resistance.

I could say nothing. Even to-day I do not know what might have happened. When Cousin George spoke, I was of his opinion ; and then, left to my own reflections, when I saw that immense body of prisoners delivered by Bonaparte and Bazaine all at once ; all our arms surrendered at Metz and Strasbourg, and our fortresses fallen one after another ; then ill-will, to say the least, of all the former place-holders under the Empire, three-fourths of whom were retaining their posts—I thought it quite possible that we might wage against the Germans a war much more dangerous than the first ; that we might destroy many more of the enemy at the same time with ourselves ; but, if I had been told to choose, I should have found it hard to decide.

Of course, if the Prussians had been defeated in the interior, before abandoning our country, they would have ruined us utterly, and set fire to every village. I have myself several times heard a *Hauptmann* at

Phalsbourg, saying, " You had better pray for us ! For woe to you, if we should be repulsed ! All that you have hitherto suffered would be but a joke. We would not leave one stone upon another in Alsace and Lorraine. That would be our defensive policy. So pray for the success of our armies. If we should be obliged to retire, you would be much to be pitied ! "

I can hear these words still.

But I should not have minded even that : I would have sacrificed house, mill, and all, if we could only have finally been victorious and remained French ; but I was in doubt. Misery makes a man lose, not courage, but confidence ; and confidence is half the battle won.

About that time we received Jacob's first letter ; he was at Rastadt, and I need not tell you what a relief it was to his mother to think that she could go and see him in one day.

Here is the letter, which I copy for you :—

" MY DEAR FATHER AND MY DEAR MOTHER,—

" THANK God, I am not dead yet ; and I should be glad to hear from you, if possible. You must know that, on arriving at Lutzelbourg, we were sent off by railway in cattle-trucks. We were thirty or forty together ; and we were not so comfortable as to be able to sit, since there were no seats, nor to breathe the air, as there was only a small hole at each side. Those of us who wanted to breathe or to drink, found a bayonet before our noses, and charitable souls were forbidden to give us a glass of water. We remained in this position more than twenty hours, standing, unable even to stoop a little. Many were taken ill ; and as for me, my thigh bones seemed to run up into my ribs, so that I could scarcely breathe, and I thought with my comrades that they had undertaken to exterminate us after some new fashion.

" During the night we crossed the Rhine, and then we went on rolling along the line, and travelling along the other side as far as Rastadt, where we are now. The hindmost trucks, where I was, remained ; the others went on into Germany. We were first put into the casemates under the ramparts ; damp, cold vaults, where many others who had arrived before us were dying like flies in October. The straw was rotting—so were the men. The doctors in the town and those of the Baden regiments were afraid of seeing sickness spreading in the country ; and since the day before yesterday those who are able to walk have been made to come out. They have been put into large wooden huts, covered in with tarred felt, where we have each received a fresh bundle of straw. Here we live, seated on the ground. We play at cards, some smoke pipes, and the Badeners mount guard over us. The hut in which I am—about three times as large as the old market-hall of Phalsbourg—is situated between two of the town bastions ; and if by some evil chance any of us took a fancy to revolt, we should be so overwhelmed with shot and shell that in ten minutes not a man would be left alive. We are well aware of this, and it keeps our indignation within bounds against these Badeners,

who treat us like cattle. We get food twice a day—a little haricot or millet soup, with a very small piece of meat, about the size of a finger: just enough to keep us alive. After such a blockade as ours, something more is wanted to set us up; our noses stand out of our faces like crows' bills, our cheeks sink in deeper and deeper; and but for the guns pointed at us, we should have risen a dozen times.

"I hope, however, I may get over it; father's cloak keeps me warm, and Cousin George's louis are very useful. With money you can get anything; only here you have to pay five times the value of what you want, for these Badeners are worse than Jews: they all want to make their fortunes in the shortest time out of the unhappy prisoners.

"I use my money sparingly. Instead of smoking, I prefer buying from time to time a little meat or a very small bottle of wine to fortify my stomach; it is much better for my health, and it is more enjoyable when your appetite is good. My appetite has never failed. When the appetite fails, comes the typhus. I do not expect I shall catch typhus. But, if it please God to let me return to Rothalp, the very first day I will have a substantial meal of ham, veal pie, and red wine. I will also invite my comrades, for it is a dreadful thing to be hungry. And now, to tell you the truth, I repent of having never given a couple of sous to some poor beggar who asked me for alms in the winter, saying that he had eaten nothing. I know what hunger is now, and I feel sorry. If you meet one in this condition, father or mother, invite him in, give him bread, let him warm himself, and give him two or three sous when he goes. Fancy that you are doing it for your son: it will bring me comfort.

"Perhaps, mother will be able to come and see me: not many people are allowed to come near us; a permit must be had from the commandant at Rastadt. These Badeners and these Bavarians, who were said to be such good Catholics, treat us as hardly as the Lutherans. I remember now that Cousin George used to say that was only part of the play: he was right. Instead of only praising and singing to our Lord, they would do well also to follow his example.

"Let mother try! Perhaps the commandant may have had a good dinner; then he will be in a good temper, and will give her leave to come into the huts: that is my wish. And now, to come to an end, I embrace you all a hundred times; father, mother, Grédel, Cousin George, and Cousin Marie Anne.

"Your Son,

"JACOB WEBER.

"I forgot to tell you that several out of our battalion escaped from Phalsbourg before and after the muster-call of the prisoners: in the number was Jean Baptiste Wernér. It is said that they have joined Garibaldi; I wish I was with them. The Germans tell us that if they can catch them they will shoot them down without pity; yes, but they won't let themselves be caught: especially Jean Baptiste; he is a soldier indeed! If we had but two hundred thousand of his sort, these

Badeners would not be bothering us with their haricot-soup, and their cannons full of grape-shot.

"Rastadt, January 6, 1871."

From that moment my wife only thought of seeing Jacob again ; she made up her bundle, put into her basket sundry provisions, and in a couple of days started for Rastadt.

I put no hindrance in her way, thinking she would have no rest until she had embraced our boy.

Grédel was quite easy, knowing that Jean Baptiste Werner was with Garibaldi. I even think she had had news from him ; but she showed us none of his letters, and had again begun to talk about her marriage portion, reminding me that her mother had had a hundred louis, and that she ought to have the same. She insisted upon knowing where our money was hidden, and I said to her, "Search ; if you can find it, it is yours."

Girls who want to be married are so awfully selfish ; if they can only have the man they want, house, family, native land, all is one to them. They are not all like that ; but a good half. I was so annoyed with Grédel that I began to wish her Jean Baptiste would come back, that I might marry them and count out her money.

But more serious affairs were then attracting the eyes of all Alsace and France.

Gambetta has been blamed for having detached Bourbaki's army to our succour by raising the blockade of Belfort. It has been said that this movement enabled the combined forces of Prince Frederic Charles and of Mecklenburg to fall upon Chanzy and overwhelm him, and that our two central armies ought to have naturally supported each other. Possibly ! I even believe that Gambetta committed a serious error in dividing our forces ; but, it must be acknowledged, that if the winter had not been against us,—if the cold had not, at that very crisis of our fate, redoubled in intensity, preventing Bourbaki from advancing with his guns and warlike stores with the rapidity necessary to prevent de Werder from fortifying his position and receiving reinforcements,—Alsace would have been delivered, and we might even have attacked Germany itself by the Grand Duchy of Baden. Then how many men would have risen in a moment ! Many times George and I, watching these movements, said to each other, "If they only get to Mutzig, we will go ! "

Yes, in war everything cannot succeed ; and you have against you not only the enemy, but frost, ice, snow, bad roads ; whilst the enemy have the railroads, which they have been stupidly allowed to take at the beginning of the campaign, and are receiving without fatigue or danger, troops, provisions, munitions of war, whatever they want ; then if good plans don't turn out successful, it is not the last but the first comers who are to be blamed.

But for the heavy snows which blocked up the roads, Bourbaki would have surprised Werder. The Germans were expecting this, for all at

once the requisitions begun again. The Landwehr, this time from Metz, and commanded by officers in spectacles, began to pass through our villages ; they were the last that we saw ; they came from the furthest extremity of Prussia. I heard them say that they had been three days and three nights on the railway ; and now they were continuing their road to Belfort by forced marches, because other troops from Paris were crowding the Lyons railway.

George could not understand how men should come from Paris, and said, " Those people are lying ! If the troops engaged in the siege were coming away, the Parisians would come out and follow them up."

At the same time we learned that the Germans were evacuating Dijon, Gray, Vesoul, places which the francs-tireurs of Garibaldi immediately occupied ; that Weder was throwing up great earthworks against Belfort : things were looking serious ; the last forces of Germany were coming into action.

Then, too, the *Indépendance* talked of nothing but peace, and the convocation of a National Assembly at Bordeaux ; the English newspapers began again to commiserate our lot, as they had done at the beginning of the war, saying that after the first battle her Majesty the Queen would interpose between us. I believe that if the French had conquered, the English Government would have cried, " Halt—enough ! too much blood has flowed already."

But as we were conquered, her Majesty did not come and separate us ; no doubt she was of opinion that everything was going on very favourably for her son-in-law, the good Fritz !

So all this acting on the part of the newspapers was beginning again ; and if Bourbaki's attempt had prospered, the outcries, the fine phrases, the tender feelings for our poor human race, civilization and international rights would have redoubled, to prevent us from pushing our advantages too far.

Unhappily, fortune was once more against us. When I say fortune, let me be understood : the Germans, who had no more forces to draw from their own country, still had some to spare around Paris, which they could dispose of without fear : they felt no uneasiness in that quarter, as we have learnt since.

If General Trochu had listened to the Parisians, who were unanimous in their desire to fight, Manteuffel could not have withdrawn from the besieging force 80,000 men to crush Bourbaki, 120 leagues away ; nor General Van Goeben 40,000 to fall upon Faidherbe in the north ; nor could others again have joined Frederick Charles to overwhelm Chanzy. This is clear enough ! The fortune of the Germans at this time was not due to the genius of their chiefs, or the courage and the number of their men ; but to the inaction of General Trochu ! Yes, this is the fact ! But it must also be owned that Gambetta, Bourbaki, Faidherbe, and Chanzy ought to have allowed for this.

However, France has not perished yet ; but she has been most unfortunate !

The cold was intense. Bourbaki was approaching Belfort ; he took

Esprels and Villersexel at the point of the bayonet ; then all Alsace rejoiced to hear that he was at Montbéliard, Sur-le-Château, Vyans, Comte-Hénaut and Chusey ; retaking all this land of good people, more ill-fated still than we, since they knew not a word of German, and that bad race bore them ill-will in consequence.

Our confidence was returning. Every evening George and I by the fireside, talked of these affairs ; reading the paper three or four times over, to get at something new.

My wife had returned from Rastadt full of indignation against the Badeners, for not having allowed her to see Jacob, or even to send him the provisions she had brought. She had only seen at a distance the wooden huts, with their four lines of sentinels, the palisades, and the ditches that surrounded them. Grédel, Marie Anne, and she, talked only of these poor prisoners ; vowing to make a pilgrimage to Marienthal if Jacob came back safe and sound.

Fatigue, anxiety, the high price of provisions, the fear of coming short altogether if the war went on, all this gave us matter for serious reflection ; and yet we went on hoping, when the *Indépendance* brought us the report of General Chanzy upon the combats at Montfort, Champagne, Parigné, l'Évêque, and other places where our columns, overpowered by the 120,000 men of Frederick Charles and the Duke of Mecklenburg, had been obliged to retire to their last lines around le Mans. That evening, as we were going home upon the stroke of ten, George said : "I don't believe much in pilgrimages, although several of my old shipmates in the *Boussole* had full confidence in our Lady of Good Deliverance : I have never made any vows ; these are no part of my principles ; but I promise to drink two bottles of good wine with Christian in honour of the République, and to distribute one for every poor man in the village if we gain the great battle of to-morrow. According to Chanzy our army is driven to bay ; it has fallen back upon its last position, and the great blow will be struck. Good-night."

"Good-night, George and Marie Anne."

We went out by moonlight, the hoar-frost was glittering on the ground ; it was the 15th January, 1871.

The next day no *Indépendance* arrived, nor the next day ; it often had missed, and would come three or four numbers together. Fresh rumours had spread ; there was a report of a lost battle ; the Landwehr at Phalsbourg were rejoicing and drinking champagne.

On the 18th, about two in the afternoon, the foot-postman Michel arrived. I was waiting at my cousin's. We were walking up and down, smoking and looking out of the windows ; Michel was still in the passage, when George opened the door and cried : "Well ?" "Here they are, Monsieur Weber."

My cousin sat at his desk. "Now we will see," said he, changing colour.

But instead of beginning by the first, he opened the second, and read aloud that report of Chanzy's in which he said that all was going on well

the evening before; and that a panic which seized upon the Breton Mobiles had disordered the army, without the possibility of either he, or the Vice-Admiral Jauréguiberry's, being able to check or stop it; so that the Prussians had rushed pell-mell into the unhappy city of Le Mans, mingled with our own troops, and taken a large body of prisoners.

I saw the countenance of my cousin change every moment; at last, he flung the journal upon the table, crying: "All is lost!"

It was as if he had pierced my heart with a knife. Yet I took up the paper and read to the end. Chanzy had not lost all hope of rallying his army at Laval, and Gambetta was hastening to join him, to support him with his courageous spirit.

"There, now," said George, "look at that!"

Placiard was passing the house arm-in-arm with a Landwehr officer, followed by a few men; they were making requisitions and entered the house opposite. "There is the Plebiscite in flesh and blood. Now that scoundrel is working for his Imperial Majesty William I., for the Germans have their emperor, as we have had ours: they will soon learn the cost of glory; each has his turn! By-and-by, when the reins are tightened, these poor Germans will be looking in every direction to see if the French are not revolting; but France will be tranquil: they themselves will have riveted their own chains, and their masters will draw the reins tighter and tighter, saying: "Now, then, Mechle! * Attention! eyes right; eyes left. Ah! you lout, do you make a wry face? I will show you that might is right in Germany, as everywhere else, if you don't know it already. Whack! how do you like that, Mechle? Aha! did you think you were getting victories or German Fatherland and German liberty, idiot? You find out now that it was to put yourself again under the yoke, as after 1815; just to show you the difference between the noble German lord and a brute of your own sort. Get on, Mechle!"

George exclaimed: "How miserable to be surprised and deluged as we have been daily by six hundred thousand Germans, and to have our hands bound like culprits, without arms, munitions, orders, chiefs or anything! Ah! the deputies of the majority who voted for war would not demand compulsory service; they feared to arm the nation. They would not risk the bodies of their own sons; the people alone should fight to defend their places, their salaries, their chateaux, their property of every sort! Miserable self-seekers! they are the cause of our ruin! their names should be exposed in every commune, to teach our children to execrate them."

He was becoming embittered, and it is not surprising, for every day we heard of fresh reverses: first the surrender of Veronne, just when Faidherbe was coming to deliver it, and the retreat of our army of the North upon Lille and Cambrai, before the overwhelming forces of Van Goeben, fresh from Paris; then the grand attack of Bourbaki from Montbéliard to Mont Vaudois, which he had pursued three successive days, the 15th,

* Nickname for the Germans, answering to the English "John Bull," and the French "Jacques Bonhomme."

16th, and 17th January without success, on account of the reinforcements which de Werder had received, and the horrible state of the roads, broken up by the rain and the snow; lastly, the arrival of Manteuffel, with his 80,000 men, also from Paris—to cut off his retreat.

Then we understood that the Landwehr had been right in telling us that they were getting reinforcements from Paris; and George, who understood such things better than I, suddenly conceived a horror for those who were commanding there.

“Either,” he said, “the Parisians are afraid to fight—which I cannot believe, for I know them—or the men in command are incapable—or traitors. Hitherto relieving armies have been sent in support of a besieged city; now we see the besiegers of a city, twice as strong as themselves in men, arms, and munitions of every kind, detaching whole armies to crush our troops fighting in the provinces: the thing is incredible. I am certain that the Parisians are demanding to be led out, especially as they are suffering from famine. Well, if sorties were taking place, the Germans would want all their men down there, and would be unable to come and overwhelm our already overtasked armies.”

Let them explain these things as they will, George was right. Since the Germans were able to send away from Paris 40,000 men in one direction, 80,000 in another, evidently they were free to undertake what they pleased; instead of surrounding the city with troops, they might have set helmets and cloaks upon sticks all round, for scarecrows, as they do to keep sparrows out of a corn-field.

Here, then, is how we have lost: it was the incapacity of the man who was commanding at Paris, and the weakness of the Government of Defence—and especially of Monsieur Jules Favre!—who, when they ought to have replaced this orator by a man of action, as Gambetta demanded, had not the courage to fulfil their duty. Everybody knows this; why not say it openly?

The only thing which cheered us a little about the end of this terrible month of January, was to learn that the francs-tireurs had blown up the bridge of Fontenoy, on the railroad between Nancy and Toul. But our joy was not of long duration; three or four days after, proclamations posted at the door of the mayoralty house gave notice that the Germans had utterly consumed the village of Fontenoy, to punish the inhabitants for not having denounced the francs-tireurs; and that all we Lorrainers were condemned for the same offence to pay an extraordinary contribution of ten millions to his Majesty the Emperor of Germany. At the same time, as the French workmen were refusing to repair this bridge, the Prussian prefect of La Menotte wrote to the Mayor of Nancy:

“If to-morrow, Tuesday, January 24, at twelve o’clock, five hundred men, from the dockyards of the city are not at the station, first the foremen, then a certain number of the workmen, will be arrested and shot immediately.”

This prefect’s name was Renard—“Count Renard.”

I mention this that his name may not be forgotten.

But all this was nothing, compared with what was to follow. One morning the Prussians had given me a few sacks of corn to grind ; I dared not refuse to work for them, as they would have crushed me with blows and requisitions : they might have carried me off nearly to Metz again, they might even have shot me. I had pleaded the snow, the ice, the failure of the water, which prevented me from grinding ; unfortunately, rain had fallen in abundance, the snow was melting, the mill-dam was full, and on the 2nd or 3rd of February (I am not sure which, I am so confused) I was piling up the sacks of that wicked set in my mill ; Father Offran and Catherine were helping, Grédel, upstairs, was dressing herself, after sweeping the house and lighting the kitchen fire. It was about eight o'clock in the morning, when looking out into the street by chance, when the water was rattling down the gutters, I saw George and Marie Anne coming.

My cousin was taking long strides, his wife coming after him ; further on a Landwehr was coming too : the people were sweeping before their doors, without caring how they bespattered the passers-by. George, near the mill, cried out, "Do you know what is going on ? "

"No—what ? "

"Well, an armistice has been concluded for twenty-one days ; the Paris forts are given up : the Prussians may set fire to the city when they please. Now they may send all their troops and all their artillery against Bourbaki ; for the armistice does not extend to the operations in the east.

George was pale with excitement, his voice shook. Grédel, at the top of the stairs, was hastily twisting her hair into a knot.

"Then, Christian," said my cousin, pulling a paper out of his pocket ; "The armies of Bourbaki and Garibaldi are surrendered by this armistice. Manteuffel has come down from Paris with 80,000 men to occupy the passes of the Jura in their rear : the unfortunate men are caught as in a vice, between him and Werder ; and all who have escaped from the hands of the Prussians and taken service again, like our poor Mobiles of Phalsbourg, will be shot ! "

While cousin was speaking, Grédel had come downstairs, without even putting on her slippers ; she was leaning against him, as pale as death, trying to read over his shoulder ; when suddenly she tore the paper from his hands. George wished he had said nothing ; but it was too late !

Grédel, after having read with clenched teeth, ran off like a mad woman, uttering fearful screams ; "Oh ! the wretches ! . . . Oh ! my poor Jean Baptiste ! . . . Oh ! the thieves ! . . . Oh ! my poor Jean Baptiste ! "

She seemed to be seeking something to fight with. And as we stood confounded at her outcries, I said : Grédel, for heaven's sake don't scandalize us in this way. The people will hear you from the other end of the village ! " She answered in a fury : "Hold your tongue ! You are the cause of it all ! "

"I ! " said I, indignantly.

"Yes, you ! " she shrieked, with a terrible flashing in her eyes ;

"you, with your plébiscite ; deceiving everybody by promising them peace ! You deserve to be along with Bazaine and the rest of them."

And my wife cried : "That girl will be the death of us."

She had sat down upon the stairs. Marie Anne, with her hands clasped, said : "Do forgive her ; her mind is going."

Never had I felt so humbled : to be treated thus by my own daughter ! But Grédel respected nothing now, and Cousin George, trying to get in a word, she exclaimed : "You ! you ! an old soldier ! Are you not ashamed of staying here, instead of going to fight ? The Landwehr are as old as you, with their grey hairs and their spectacles ; they don't make speeches ; they all march. And that's why we are beaten !"

At last, I became furious ; and I was looking for my cowhide behind the door, to bring her to her senses, when, unfortunately, a Landwehr came in to ask if the flour was ready. The moment Grédel caught sight of him, she uttered such a savage shriek that my ears still tingle with it, and in a second she had laid hold of her hatchet ; George had scarcely time to seize her by her twisted back hair, when the hatchet had flown from her hand, whizzing through the air, and was quivering three inches deep in the doorpost.

The Landwehr, an elderly man, with great eyes and a red nose, had seen the steel flash past close to his ear ; he had heard it whiz, and as Grédel was struggling with George, crying : "Oh, the villain ; I have missed him !" he turned, and ran off at the top of his speed. I ran to the mill-dam, supposing he was going to the Mayor's ; but no, he ran a great deal farther than that, and ran on till he reached Wéchem.

Then Grédel became aware that she had made a mistake ; she went up into her room, put on her shoes, took her basket, went into the kitchen for a knife and a loaf, and then she left the house ; running down the other side of the hill to gain the Krapenfelz, where our cow was with several others, under the charge of the old ragdealer.

"This is a very bad business," said George, fixing his eyes upon me ; "that Landwehr will denounce you : this evening the Prussian gendarmes will be here. I'm sure I don't know, my poor Christian, where you got that girl from ; amongst those who have gone before us, there must have been some very different from your poor mother, and grandmother Katherine."

"What would you have," said Marie Anne ; "she is fond of her Jean Baptiste." And I thought : "If he but had her now ; it is not I would refuse them permission to marry now ; no, not I : I only wish they were married already !"

I was thinking how I might settle this dangerous business. George said we must overtake the Landwehr, and slip three or four cent sous pieces in his hand, to induce him to hold his tongue. The Prussians are softened with money. But where could he be found now ? How was he to be overtaken ? I had no longer my two beautiful nags. So I resolved to leave it all to Providence.

To my great surprise, the Landwehr never returned. That same day two other Germans, with Lieutenant Hertig, came to take an invoice of the

flour, without mentioning that affair : one would have thought that nothing had occurred. The next day, and the day after that, we were still in painful expectation ; but that man gave no sign of appearing. No doubt he must have been a marauder ; one of those base fellows who enter houses without orders, to receive requisitions of every kind, to sell again in the neighbouring villages ; such things had been done more than once since the arrival of the Germans. This is the conclusion I came to by-and-by ; but at that time the fear of seeing that fellow returning with the gendarmes, left me no peace ; every minute, my wife standing at the door, would say : "Christian, run ! Here are the Prussian gendarmes coming ! "

For a cow, or a Jew astride upon a donkey at the end of the road she would throw one into fits.

Grédel remained a week in the woods in the Krapenfelz. Every day the woodman brought her news of what was going on in the village. At last she came back, laughing ; she went up into her room to change her clothes, and went on again with her work without any allusion to the past. We did not want to start the subject of Jean Baptiste again ; but she herself, seeing us dispirited, at last said to us : " Pooh ! it's all right now. There ; look at that ! "

It was a letter from Jean Baptiste Werner, which she had received among the rocks of the Krapenfelz. In that letter, which I read with much astonishment, Werner related that he had at first wished to join Garibaldi at Dijon ; but that for want of money, he had been obliged to stop at Besançon, where the volunteers of the Vosges and of Alsace were being organized ; that upon the arrival of Bourbaki, he had enlisted as a gunner in the 20th corps. Two days after there were engagements at Esprels and Villersexel, where more than four thousand Prussians had remained on the field. The cold was extraordinary. The Prussians, repulsed by our columns, had retired from village to village, on the other side of the Lisaine, between Montbéliard and Mont Vaudois. There Werder, behind a deep ravine, had mounted batteries of 24 pounders, well protected on three stages one over another ; his army and his reinforcements were concentrated and securely intrenched. In spite of this, Bourbaki, wanting to relieve Belfort and descend into Alsace, had given orders for a general assault, and all that country, for three days, resembled a sea of smoke and flame under the tremendous fire of the hostile armies. Unhappily the passage could not be forced ; and the exhaustion of munitions, the fatigue, the sharp sufferings of cold and hunger—for there were no stores of clothing and provisions in our rear—all these causes had compelled us to retire, but in the hope of renewing the assault ; when all at once the news spread that another German army was standing in our line of retreat, near Dôle : a considerable army, from Paris. They had hurried to get clear as far as possible by gaining Pontarlier ; but these fresh troops had a great advantage over us ; Werder, also, was following us up ; and we were going to be surrounded on all sides around Besançon. Jean Baptiste went on to say that then Bourbaki had attempted his own life, and was seriously wounded ; that General Clinchamp had then assumed the com-

mand-in-chief; but that all these disasters would not have hindered us from arriving at Lyons, across the Jura, if the Maires of the villages had not published the armistice, causing the army to neglect to secure a line of retreat; that a great number had even laid down their arms and withdrawn into the villages; that the Prussians had kept advancing, and that only in the evening, when they had occupied all the passes, General Manteuffel declared that the armistice did not extend to operations in the east, and that our army must lay down their arms, as those of Sedan and Metz had done! But the soldiers of the republic had refused to surrender, and they had made a passage through the ice, the snow, and thousands of Prussian corpses, to Switzerland.

Jean Baptiste Warner related, in this long letter, full particulars of all that he had suffered; the attacks delivered by the corps of General Billot, who was charged to protect the retreat, upon the rocks, at the foot of precipices, in all the deep passes where the enemy lay in wait to cut off our retreat; how many of our poor fellows had perished of cold and hunger! And then the admirable reception given to our unhappy soldiers, by the noble Swiss, who had received them, not as strangers, but as brothers: every town, village, and house, was opened to them with kindness. It is manifest that the Swiss are a great people; for greatness is not to be measured by the extent of a country, and the number of the inhabitants, as the Germans suppose; but by the humanity of the people, the elevation of their character, their respect for unsuccessful courage, their love of justice and of liberty.

How much help have the Swiss sent us in succour, in money, in clothing, in food, in seed corn, for our poor fellow-countrymen ruined by the war! It came to Saverne, to Phalsburg, to Petite-Pierre—everywhere. Ah, we perceived then that heaven and earth had not altogether deserted us; we saw that there were yet brave hearts, true republicans; that all men were not born for fire, pillage and slaughter; that there are men in the world besides hypocrites—true Christians, inspired by Him who said to men: “love one another; ye are brethren.” He would not have invented petroleum bombshells, or declared that brute-force dominated over right, like those barbarians from the other side of the Rhine.

That letter of Jean Baptiste Werner's pleased me; it was clear that he was a brave man and a good patriot. But in the meanwhile, the policy of Bismarck and Jules Favre went on its way. The order of the day was, “elect deputies to sit in the assembly at Bordeaux,” which was to decide for peace, or the continuance of the war; the twenty-one days' armistice had no other object, it was said.

So those who did not care to become Prussians took up arms, George and I the first; myself with the greatest zeal, for every day I reproached myself with that abominable Plébiscite as a crime. And now began the old story again: no Legitimists, no Bonapartists, no Orleanists could be found; all cried: “We are Republicans. Vote for us!”

But in every part of the country through which the Prussians had gone, the plébiscite was remembered; the people were beginning to under-

stand that this unworthy farce was our ruin, and that men should be judged by their actions, not their words.

At Strasbourg, at Nancy, all who desired to remain French nominated two lists of old republicans, who immediately started for Bordeaux. Gambetta was elected by us and by La Meurthe ; he was also elected in many other departments, with Thiers, Garibaldi, Faiderbe, Chanzy, etc.

These elections once more revived our hopes. We supposed that everything had taken place in the West and the South as with us.

Gambetta, who never lost his sound judgment in critical moments, had declared that all the old official deputies of Bonaparte, all the senators, councillors of State, and prefects of the Empire, were disqualified for election. George commended him. "When a spendthrift devours all his living in debauchery, he is put under restraint ; much more, therefore," he urged, "ought men to be restrained who have devoured the wealth of the nation and put our two finest provinces in jeopardy. All those men ought for ever to be held incapable of exercising political functions."

But Bismarck, who relied chiefly on the old Imperial functionaries, to testify his gratitude to the *honest man* for all he had done for Prussia,—for his noble behaviour at Sedan, and his gift of Metz to his Majesty William, protested against this manifesto by Gambetta : he declared that the elections would not then be free, and that liberty was so dear to his heart, that he had rather break the armistice than in any way cramp the freedom of the elections.

George, on hearing this, broke out into a rage. "What," he cried, "this Bismarck, who has warned the Prussian deputies to be careful of their expressions in speaking of the nobleness and the majesty of King William, 'because laws exist in Prussia against servants who presume to insult their masters'—this very Bismarck comes here to defend liberty, and support the accomplices of Bonaparte ! Oh ! these defenders of liberty !"

Unhappily, all this was useless ; the Prussians were already in the forts of Paris, and the menaces of Bismarck had more weight in France than the words of Gambetta. Therefore once more we had to yield to his Majesty William, and many of our deputies are indebted to him for their admission into the Chamber of Bordeaux.

These defenders of the Republic immediately showed that they were not ungrateful to Bismarck ; for they hissed Garibaldi who had come from Italy, old, sick and infirm, with his two sons, to fight the enemies of France and uphold justice, when all Europe held aloof.

Garibaldi was not even allowed to reply : these representatives of the people hissed him down ! He calmly withdrew !

The Sunday following—I am ashamed to say it—our curé Daniel, and many other cures in our neighbourhood, preached that Garibaldi was a *canaille*. I am not condemning them ; I am simply telling a fact. They had received orders from their bishops, and they obeyed ; for the poor country priest is at his bishop's mercy, and under his orders, like a whip in a driver's hand : if he disobeys, he is turned out ! I know that many would rather have been silent than say such things, and I pity them !

Well, Bismarck might well laugh; he had more friends among us than was believed. Those who want to make their profits out of nations, always come to an understanding; their interests and their enemies are the same.

Then the Assembly of Bordeaux voted peace. No hard matter; only involving the sacrifice of Alsace and Lorraine, and five milliards as an indemnity for the trouble which the Prussians had taken in bombarding, devastating, and stripping us!

Then our unhappy deputies of Alsace and Lorraine, were declared by their French brothers, against every feeling of justice; for nobody in the world had the right to make Germans of us; to rend us from the body of our French mother-country, and fling us bleeding into the barbarian's camp, as a lump of living flesh is thrown to a wild beast, to satisfy it: no, no one in the world had this right. We alone ought freely to choose, and decide by our own votes, whether we would become Germans or remain French. But with Bismarck and William, right, liberty, and justice are powerless: might is everything. Our sorrowing deputies at last protested:—

“The representatives of Alsace and Lorraine, previous to any negotiations for peace, have laid upon the table of the National Assembly a declaration, by which they affirm, in the clearest and most emphatic language, that their will and their right is to remain Frenchmen.

“Delivered up, in contempt of justice and by a hateful exercise of power, to the dominion of the foreigner, we have one last sad duty to fulfil.

“We again declare null and void a compact which disposes of us against our consent.

“The vindication of our rights remains for ever open to each and all, after the form and in the measure which our consciences may dictate.

“In taking leave of this Chamber, in which it would be a lowering of our dignity to sit longer, and in spite of the bitterness of our sorrow, our last impulse is one of gratitude for the men who for six months have never ceased to defend us; and we are filled with a deep and unalterable love for our mother-country, from which we are violently torn.

“We will ever follow you with our prayers; and with unshaken confidence, we await the future day when regenerated France shall resume the course of her high destiny.

“Your brothers of Alsace and Lorraine, separated at this moment from the common family, away from their home, will ever cherish a filial affection for their beloved France, until the day when she shall come to reclaim her place among us.”

These were their words.

Monsieur Thiers asked them if they knew any other way of saving France? No reply was made. Unfortunately there was none: after the capitulation of Paris, the sacrifice of an arm was needful to save the body.

Half the deputies were already thinking of other things; peace made, they only thought of naming a King and of decapitalizing Paris, as the newspapers said, to punish it for having proclaimed the République! All

these people who had presented themselves before the electors with professions of republicanism, were royalists.

Gambetta having accepted the representation of the Bas Rhin (Alsace), left the chamber with the deputies ; and other old republicans, contemptuously hissed whenever they opened their mouths, gave in their resignations.

Paris was agitated. A rising was apprehended.

About that time, early in March, 1871, Prussian tax-collectors, controllers, *gardes généraux*, and other functionaries, came to replace our own ; we were warned that the French language would be abolished in our schools, and that the brave Alsatians, who felt any wish to join the armies of the King of Prussia, would be met with every possible consideration ; they might even be admitted into the guard of his Royal and Imperial Majesty. About this time, an old friend of Cousin George's, Nicolas Hague, a master saddler, a wealthy and highly respectable man, came to see him from Paris.

Nicolas Hague had bought many vineyards in Alsace ; he had planned, before the war, to retire amongst us, as soon as he had settled his affairs ; but after all the cruelties perpetrated by the Germans, seeing our country fallen into their hands, he was in haste to sell his vineyards again, not caring to live amongst such barbarians.

George and Marie Anne were delighted to receive this old friend ; and immediately an upstairs room was got ready for him, and he made himself at home.

He was a man of fifty, with red ears, a kind of collar of beard around his face, large velvet waistcoat adorned with gold chains and seals ; a thorough Alsatian, full of experience and sound common sense.

His wife, a native of Bar-le-Duc, and his two daughters were staying with their relations ; they were resting and recruiting their strength after the sufferings and agonies of the siege ; he was as busy as possible getting rid of his property ; for he looked upon it as a disgrace to bring into the world children destined to have their faces slapped in honour of the King of Prussia.

I remember that on the second day after his arrival, as we were all dining together at my cousin's, after having explained to us his views, Nicolas Hague began telling us the miseries of the siege of Paris. He told us that during the whole of that long winter, every day were seen before the bakers' shops and the butchers' stalls strings of old men half clothed, and poor women holding their children, discoloured with the cold, close in their arms, waiting three or four hours in rain, snow, and wind, for a small piece of black bread, or of horseflesh ; which often never came ! Never had he heard any of these unhappy people expressing any desire to surrender ; but superior officers and staff officers had shamelessly declared, from the earliest days of the siege, that Paris could not hold out ! And these men, formerly so proud of their ranks, their epaulettes and their titles, who were solely charged to defend us and to uphold the honour of the nation, discouraged by their language

those who were trusting in them, and whose bread they had eaten for years, passed in useless reviews and parades, in frivolous fêtes at Saint Cloud, at Compiègne, the Tuileries, and elsewhere.

According to Nicolas Hague, all our disasters, from Sedan to the capitulation of Paris, were attributable to the disaffection of the staff-officers, the committees, and those former Bonapartist place-holders, who knew well that if the Republic drove out the Prussians, nobody in the world would be able to destroy it; and as they did not care for the Republic, they acted accordingly.

“There is a great outcry at the present moment against General Trochu,” said he, “principally got up by the Bonapartists, who, in their hearts, reproach him with having supported France rather than their dynasty. They make him responsible for all our calamities; and many Republicans are simple enough to believe them. But, when it is remembered that this man arrived only at the last moment, when all was lost already; when the Prussians were advancing by forced marches upon Paris; when MacMahon was forsaking the capital, *by order of the Emperor*, to go to Sedan, to get the army crushed down there which was to have covered us; when it is remembered that at that moment Paris had no arms, no munitions of war, no provisions, no troops; that the whole neighbourhood, men, women, and children, were taking refuge in the city; that waggons full of furniture, hay, and straw were choking the streets; that order must be restored amidst this abominable confusion, the forts armed, the National Guard organized, the inhabitants put upon rations, &c.; and, then, that all those thousands of men, who did not know even how to keep in ranks, were to be taught to handle a musket, taught to march, and, finally, led under fire;—when all these things are remembered, it must be acknowledged that, for one man, it was too much, and that, if faults have been committed, it is not General Trochu who is to be blamed, but the miserable men who brought us to such a pass. Above all let us be just. It is quite clear that, if General Trochu had had under his orders real soldiers, commanded by real officers, he might have made great sorties, broken the lines, or at least kept the Germans busy round the place. But how could I, Nicolas Hague, saddler, Claude Frichet, the grocer round the corner, and a couple of hundred thousand others like us, who did not even know the word of command—how could we fight like old troops? We were not wanting in goodwill, nor in courage; but every man to his trade. As for our percussion rifles and our flint locks, and a hundred other discouraging things, you feel utterly cast down when you know that the enemy are well armed and supported by a terrible artillery. Trochu was well aware of these things; and I believe that neither he, nor Jules Favre, nor Gambetta, nor any of those who declared themselves Republicans on the 4th September, are responsible for our misfortunes, but Bonaparte and all his crew!”

At last, having heard Nicolas Hague explain his views, seeing that we had been delivered up by selfish men—as Cousin Jacques Desjardins had foreseen four months before—but that the Republic was in existence, and

that no doubt justice would be done upon all who had brought us into this sad condition, by which means we might rise some day and get our turn, I had resolved to sell my mill, my land, and everything that belonged to me in the country, and go and settle in France ; for the sight of Placiard and the other Prussian functionaries, who were fraternizing together, and shouting, " Long live old Germany ! " made my blood boil. I could not stand it.

Cousin George, to whom I mentioned my design, said : " Then, if all the Alsacians and Lorrainers go, in five or six years all our country will be Prussian. Instead of going to America, the Germans will pour in here by hundreds of thousands ; they will find in our country, almost for nothing, fields, meadows, vineyards, hop-grounds, noble forests, the finest lands, the richest and most productive in central Europe. How delighted would Bismarck and William be if they saw us decamping ! No, no ; I'll stay. But this does not mean that I am becoming a Prussian—quite the contrary. But in this ill-drawn treaty there are two good articles ; the first affirms that the Alsacians and the Lorrainers, dwelling in Alsace-Lorraine, may, up to the month of October, 1872, declare their intention of remaining French, on condition of possessing an estate in France ; the second affirms that the French may retain their landed estates in Germany."

" Well, I at once elect to remain a Frenchman, and I take up my abode in Paris with my friend Nicolas Hague, who will be happy to do me this service. I don't want to become a burgomaster, a municipal councillor, or anything of that kind ; it will be enough for me to possess good land, a thriving business, and a pleasant house. Yes—I intend to declare at once ; and if all who are able to secure an abode in France will do as I am doing, we shall have German authorities over us it is true, but the land and the people will remain French ; and the land and the men are everything.

" Were not the old préfets and sous-préfets of the *honest man* intruders, just as much as these men are ? Did they care for anything but making us pay what the chambers had voted, and compelling us to elect for deputies old fogies who would be safe to vote whichever way the Emperor required them ? Did they trouble themselves about us, our commerce, our trade, any farther than merely to draw from us the best part of our profits for themselves, their friends, their acquaintances, and all the supporters of the dynasty of the perjuror ?

" These new préfets, these *kreis-directors*, these burgomasters, set over us to defend the Prussian dynasty, will not concern us much more than the others did. At first they will try mildness ; and as we have been well able to remain French under the préfets of Bonaparte, so we may live and remain French under those of Emperor William.

" My principal concern is that a large majority should declare as I am about to do. The fear is lest the Placiards, and other mayors of the Empire kept in their places by the Prussians, will be able to turn aside the people from declaring themselves as Frenchmen, by intimidating them with threats of being looked upon suspiciously, or even of being expelled ;

the fear is lest these fellows should keep back day after day those who are afraid of deciding: for when once the day is past, those who have not declared for France will be Prussians; their children will serve and be subject to blows at the age of twenty, for old Germany; and those who have already fled into France will be forced to return or renounce their inheritance for ever.

“ My chief hope now is that the French journals, which are always so busy saying useless things, will now, without fail, warn the Alsacians and Lorrainers of their danger, and explain to them that if they declare for France their persons and their property will be guaranteed in safety by the treaty; but if they neglect to do so, their persons and their property fall under the Prussian laws. They would even do well to furnish a clear and simple form of declaration. By this step, all who are interested would be clearly informed, and these papers would have done the greatest service to France.

“ As for me, here I stay! I am here upon my own land; I have bought it; I have paid for it with the sweat of my brow. I will pay the taxes; I will hold my tongue, that I may be neither worried nor driven away. I will sell my crops to the Germans as dearly as I can; I will employ none but Frenchmen; and if the Republic acquires strength, as I hope it will—for now the people see what Monarchies have been able to do for us—if the nation transacts its own business wisely, sensibly, with moderation, good order and reflection, she will soon rise again, she will once more become powerful. In ten years our losses will be repaired: we shall possess well-informed constituencies, national armies, upright administrations, a commissariat and a staff very different from that which we have known.

“ Then let the French return; they will find us, as before, ready to receive them with open arms, and to march at their sides.

“ But if they pursue their old course of *coups d'état* and revolution; if the adventurers, the Jesuits and the egotists form another coalition against justice; if they re-commence their disgraceful farces of plébiscites and constitutions by yes and no, and bayonets pointed at people's throats and with electors of whom one-half cannot even read; if they bestow places again by patronage and recommendation of friends, instead of honestly throwing them open to competition; if they refuse elementary education and compulsory military service; if they will have, as in past times, an ignorant populace, and an army filled with mercenaries, in order that the sons of nobles and bourgeois may remain peacefully at home, whilst the poor labour like beasts of burden and go and meet their deaths upon battle-fields for matters they have no concern with:—in a word, if they overthrow the Republic and set up monarchy again, then what miseries may we not expect? Poor France, rent by her own children, will end like Poland; all our conquests of '89 will be lost. Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Holland, all the free nations of the Continent will share our fate; the great splay feet of the Germans will overspread Europe, and we unhappy Alsacians and Lorrainers will be forced to bow the head under the yoke, and go off to America.”

This speech of George's made me reflect, and I resolved to wait. Many Alsacians and Lorrainers have thought the same; and this is why M. Thiers was right in saying that the Republic is the form of government which least divides us: it is also the only one which can save us. Any other form of government, upon which Legitimists, Orleanists and Bonapartists could well meet on common ground, would end in our destruction. If it should happen that one of these parties succeeds in placing its prince upon the throne, the next day all the others would unite and overthrow it; and the Germans, taking advantage of our division, would seize upon Franche Comté and Champagne.

The deputies of the Right ought to reflect upon this. It is to reinstate the country, not a party, that they are at Versailles; it is to restore harmony to our distracted country, and not to sow fresh dissensions. I appeal to their patriotism, and, if this is not enough, to their prudence. New *coups-d'état* would level us into fresh revolutions more and more terrible. The nation, whose desire is for peace, labour, order, liberty, education and justice for all, is weary of seeing itself torn to pieces by Emperors and Kings; the nation might become exasperated against these anglers after things in troubled waters, and the consequences might become terrible indeed.

Let them ponder well; it is their duty to do so.

And all these princes—all these shameless pretenders, who make no scruple of coming to divide us at the crisis when union alone can save us—when the German is occupying all the strong places in the frontier, and is watching the opportunity to rend away another portion of our country! Those men who slip into the army through favour; whose disaffected newspapers impede the revival of trade, in the hope of disgusting the people of the Republic! These princes who one day pledge their word of honour, and the day after withdraw it, and who are not ashamed to claim millions in the midst of the general ruin!—Yes; these men must conduct themselves differently, if they don't want us to call to remembrance their father Louis Philippe, intriguing with the Bonapartists to dethrone his benefactor Charles X.; and their grandfather, Philippe Egalité, intriguing with the Jacobins and voting the death of Louis XVI. to save his fortune, whilst his son was intriguing in the army of the north with the traitor Dumouriez to march upon Paris and overthrow the established laws.

But the day of intrigues has passed by! Bonaparte has stripped many besides these Princes of Orleans; he has shot, transported, totally ruined fathers of families by thousands; their wives and their children have lost all! Not one of these unhappy creatures claims a farthing; they would be ashamed to ask anything of their country at such a time as this: the Princes of Orleans, alone, claim their millions.

Frankly, this is not handsome.

I am but a plain miller; by hard work I have won the half of what I possess; but if my little fortune and my life could restore Alsace and

Lorraine to France, I would give them in a moment ; and if my person were a cause of division and trouble, and dangerous to the peace of my country, I would abandon the mill built by my ancestors, the lands which they have cleared, those which I have acquired by work and by saving, and I would go ! The idea that I was serving my country, that I was helping to raise it, would be enough for me. Yes, I would go, with a brimming heart, but without casting a backward glance.

And now let us finish the story of the Plébiscite.

Jacob returned to work at the mill ; Jean Baptiste Werner also came back to demand Grédel in marriage. Grédel consented with all her heart ; my wife and I gave our consent cordially.

But the dowry ? This was on Grédel's mind. She was not the girl to begin housekeeping without her hundred livres ! So I had again to run the water out of the sluice to the very bottom, get into the mud again, and once more handle the pick and spade.

Grédel watched me ; and when the old chest came to the light of day with its iron hoops, when I had set it on the bank, and opened the rusty padlock, and the crowns all safe and sound glittered in her eyes, then she melted ; all was well now ! She even kissed me and hung upon her mother's neck.

The wedding took place on the 1st of July last ; and in spite of the unhappy times, it was a joyful one.

Towards the end of the fête, and when they were uncorking two or three more bottles of old wine, in honour of M. Thiers and all the good men who are supporting him in founding the Republic in France, Cousin George announced to us that he had taken Jean Baptiste Werner into partnership in his stone quarry. Building stone will be wanted ; the bombardments and the fires in Alsace will long furnish work for architects, quarrymen, and masons ; it will be a great and important business.

My cousin declared, moreover, that he, George Weber, would supply the money required ; that Jean Baptiste should travel to take orders and work the quarries, and they would divide the profits equally.

M. Fingado, Notary, seated at the table, drew the deeds out of his pocket, and read them to us, to the satisfaction of all.

And now things are in order, and we will try to regain by labour, economy, and good conduct, what Bonaparte lost for us by his plébiscite.

My story is ended ; let every one derive from it such reflections and instruction as he may.

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